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THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

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EDITED BY HIS SONS,

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M.A.

VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE;

AND

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF SURREY, RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

As he had a great number of friends of the best men, so no man had ever the confidence to avow himself to be his enemy.—LORD CLARENDON.

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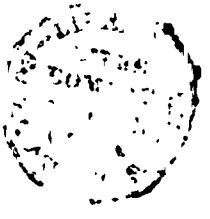
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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PREFACE.

THE Correspondence of Mr. Wilberforce is given with some confidence to the public, after its reception of his "Life." To the defects of that work none are more alive than its compilers; but its general interest has been proved by a sale of 30,000 volumes, and by the almost unanimous voice of a host of critics. To these, however, there has been one important exception which seems to call for some specific answer. They have as yet taken no public notice of Mr. Clarkson's "Strictures" on their work, and they now approach them with the earnest hope that their long silence may enable them to avoid all controversy with a man to whom age and past services give so just a title to respect. Nothing but a regard to the fidelity of history could induce them to break at all the silence they have heretofore maintained; and in doing so at last, they rejoice to think that there are but two of their statements of fact which Mr. Clarkson controverts. The first occurs in Vol. I. p. 151. "Mr. Clarkson in the spring of 1787 was in London, and was introduced to Mr. Wilber-

force." On this Mr. Clarkson remarks, that he "was introduced by no man to Mr. Wilberforce. I went to his door alone, with no other introducer than my book."

The other point asserted by Mr. C. to be a "mistake," is contained in the following sentences: — "He [Mr. Wilberforce] was busily employed pursuing these inquiries among the African merchants throughout the year 1786, and afterwards he got also together at his house, from time to time, persons who knew anything about the matter."* (Vol. I. p. 149.) "As respects the date, 1786," says Mr. C., "I affirm, on my own responsibility, that this is a mistake." After making these exceptions, Mr. Clarkson states, though with a certain reservation, "I have anxiously sought for other contradictions between the biographer's story and my own, but I have found none." These, therefore, may be supposed to be the only parts of the narrative which he considers erroneous.

As to the first of these statements, even were Mr. Clarkson's contradiction conclusive, the error would be scarcely worth correction. It matters little whether Mr. Clarkson called on Mr. Wilberforce with Mr.

* This passage is not quoted quite correctly in Mr. Clarkson's "Strictures." In the "Life" it is given in Mr. Wilberforce's own words, as it occurs in one of his memoranda in the possession of his family. It could only be from not adverting to this circumstance, that Mr. Clarkson could speak of the existence of these meetings as "probably learnt from my history."

Ramsay's introduction or without it. As a clergyman of the church of England Mr. Clarkson would have been sure of a courteous reception, if his errand had been less interesting. But, though the fact is unimportant in itself, accuracy is of such importance that it is right to show that Mr. Clarkson's assertion cannot be considered as conclusive.

Mr. Clarkson had been spending a month at Mr. Ramsay's house at Teston, and had there professed his resolution of devoting himself to the Abolition. He had undertaken to send Mr. Ramsay a weekly account of what he did. When he returned to town he was, he tells us, "introduced by letter to several members of parliament." He now adds that Mr. Wilberforce was not amongst the number; but this does not disprove the assertion of the Life. Mr. Ramsay for more than a year had corresponded on this very subject with Mr. W. through Sir C. Middleton: he had joined in the request that Mr. Wilberforce would bring it before parliament, and received his assurance that if no fitter person offered he would perform the task. It is most improbable that in this correspondence his guest Mr. Clarkson should not have been mentioned: when, therefore, this gentleman knocked at Mr. Wilberforce's door, though he believed himself to come "without an introduction," there can be little doubt that he was not unknown.

Still more inconclusive is Mr. C.'s evidence upon the second point, "that Mr. W. had made no inquiries on the subject of the Slave Trade as soon as 1786." The grounds of his opinion are as follows:—"The first persons connected with Africa, whom Mr. Wilberforce ever saw for the purpose of obtaining knowledge on the subject of the African Trade, were a Mr. Nisbett, a surgeon residing in the Minories, London, Mr. Weuves, an African merchant, and Governor Miles of Cape Coast Castle, and the time of his seeing these persons was not till the spring of the year 1787. A prior possession of the knowledge which these gentlemen might have communicated to Mr. Wilberforce on the African part of the question is inconsistent with the degree of information I found him to possess on that subject when our acquaintance began." And again, "I found the subjects of slavery and the Slave Trade deeply impressed on his heart, but of the Slave Trade especially he had very little knowledge in detail. He had already learned from Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Latrobe much concerning the treatment of the slaves in the West Indies, but he knew very little of the African department of the subject." *

* The admission contained in this last sentence might lead to the remark, that some allusion to the sources of Mr. Wilberforce's information might have been expected in the "History of Abolition." Surely Mr. Clarkson himself must concur in the opinion, that it would have been better if he had done more ample justice to this part of his subject.

These are the sole grounds of Mr. Clarkson's assertion. Were they absolutely uncontradicted, they would be but a slight basis for so confident a declaration. For to what do they amount? "I affirm," says Mr. Clarkson, "that Mr. Wilberforce had not inquired into the subject of the Slave Trade in 1786, because in 1787 I did not discover that he was possessed of information of which such inquiries would have made him master." But this slight negative evidence is by no means uncontradicted. For, first; Mr. Latrobe asserts distinctly, that it was not on slavery, but on the *Slave Trade* also, that Mr. Wilberforce inquired, and received information from himself before the date of Mr. Clarkson's visit in 1787; and one such positive witness would alone disprove all Mr. Clarkson's negative conclusions. But there are more behind. There is in the list of informants whom Mr. Clarkson asserts himself to have made known to Mr. Wilberforce, a variation between the text of the "History of Abolition," and its Commentary in the "Strictures," too remarkable to be passed over. In the latter Mr. Newton's name is silently omitted. It is evident that, when he penned his "History," Mr. Clarkson supposed that Mr. Newton was first made known by himself to Mr. Wilberforce. It is strange that he could read the "Life" without perceiving that, in the intimate intercourse which, without his knowledge, had previously subsisted for a

year and a half between Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Newton, there is the strongest disproof of his assumption. For we are not left to gather from mere probability that Mr. Newton spoke upon the subject. Remorse for his own early share in its iniquity kept it so constantly before that holy man, that Mr. Wilberforce frequently declared that "he never spent one half hour in his company without hearing some allusion to it."

Is it then conceivable that, after Mr. Wilberforce had promised Sir Charles Middleton in 1786 that, if no fitter person offered, he would bring the question of the Trade before the House of Commons, he should spend days in confidential intercourse with Mr. Newton, and yet make no inquiries on a subject to which his aged friend was perpetually reverting? From whom could he learn so easily, amply, and accurately? What knowledge did Mr. Clarkson at that time possess, which could be put in comparison with that of Mr. Newton, who had passed so many years on the African main, or in the middle passage? Did the subject never turn up during so many months? Is it not a far more reasonable hypothesis that, when called upon by a stranger, Mr. Wilberforce, now for three years member for the largest county in England, chose rather to observe than to dilate? It would have been as inconsistent with his character as with his station had he acted otherwise.

One further strong presumption in favour of this view remains. It can be shown that, in a case exactly similar, Mr. Clarkson fell into the same mistake. In the spring of 1788 Mr. Clarkson saw Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt on the same subject. He conversed freely with them both, and left them, impressed with the belief that to them, as to Mr. Wilberforce before, the subject was new. "Mr. Pitt appeared to me to have but little knowledge" of the matter; "Mr. Grenville had not more (knowledge) than Mr. Pitt." "In the former case, I had given birth to an interest in favour of our cause." But it is now known that a negotiation, of which Mr. Clarkson was totally ignorant, was carried on in the autumn of 1787 between France and England, with a view to a joint Abolition, and that Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were not only interested in the subject, but had studied it with deep attention.* What other subject was it which Mr. Pitt summoned Mr. Ramsay to his own† house to discuss in the month of January? And, singularly enough, one especial topic, the natural productions of Africa, which Mr. Clarkson describes as having so "astonished" the minister, was the very same on which he had communicated with Mr. Wilberforce in a letter written in the month preceding Mr. Clarkson's visit.‡

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 161.
† *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 167.
‡ *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 162.

It is clear, therefore, that Mr. Pitt's inquiries were suggested by his knowledge, and not, as it appeared to Mr. Clarkson, by his ignorance. And in this case, as in that of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Clarkson, young, ardent, and unused to public life, drew an utterly unfounded inference from that silent attention which habits of public business tend so certainly to form.

But Mr. Clarkson argues further, that Mr. Wilberforce must have been ignorant upon the subject, because "he does not hesitate to assert that" his own essay "was the first act to enlighten the people of England on the subject of the commerce at least." Now without undervaluing the good accomplished by this essay, we must pronounce this one of those strong assertions which will bear no close examination. That Mr. Wilberforce might have been informed upon the matter by Mr. Latrobe, and still more by Mr. Newton, has been already shown; but there were other quarters, also, in which, in spite of general ignorance upon the subject, he might gain the necessary knowledge. In the summer of 1786 he became acquainted with the Wesley family, and then, if not before, he must undoubtedly have known those "Thoughts upon Slavery" in which the active mind of John Wesley had long before expressly thrown out the question, "In what numbers, and in what manner, are they (the slaves) carried to America?" A curious link of

evidence remains to show that this question, and the answer to it, had probably been practically useful to Mr. Wilberforce; for that answer refers to the authority of Anderson on trade and commerce, and Mr. Pitt's papers supply us with proof that Mr. Wilberforce had not only used this reference himself, but had also made it known to the minister. Mr. Pitt writes—

"Dear Wilberforce,

"You may remember you promised me the use of your Anderson's Dictionary of Commerce, which you fancied was in your London collection. If you can find it and spare it, and will trust me with it, pray send it to Savile Street. Send me word at the same time that I shall see you at Brighton. I shall be in town to-morrow, and probably set out on Thursday.

"Ever yours,

"W. Pitt."

This letter is without date; but as it was addressed to Mr. Wilberforce at his lodgings, Conduit Street, Bond Street, it cannot have been written later than the summer of 1786, so that this may possibly have been the source whence Mr. Pitt derived an acquaintance with the African trade which dictated those inquiries which Mr. Clarkson attributed to his ignorance; and it therefore establishes the fact, that this peculiar branch of the question had thus early formed the sub-

ject of intercourse between Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt.

Such are, in truth, the only questions of fact on which there is any disagreement between the editors and Mr. Clarkson. They think them points of no considerable interest, and they cannot allow that Mr. Clarkson's "Strictures" have at all disproved their former statement.

But when these are settled a long account remains behind. Mr. Clarkson complains in feeling language, and the complaint has been repeated in far different tones by injudicious friends, that a want of respect for him is manifest throughout the "Life." This charge is based on several counts; various expressions are noticed which are said to show contempt for Mr. Clarkson; some private letters which had passed between him and the editors are further put in evidence; too little also, it is asserted, is said of his exertions; and his pecuniary reimbursement is needlessly proclaimed; and, lastly, they are charged with having raised, without necessity, a fruitless question as to the priority of Mr. Clarkson's and their father's dedication to the great cause which they maintained in common.

On each of these points they feel compelled to say a few words, and they entreat for them a patient and impartial hearing.

On the first of these counts they cannot enter into

the details which respect for the complaints of Mr. Clarkson demand at their hands, without, in the first place, satisfying their own feelings by the strongest and most entire denial of their having ever entertained any such thought or intention as that of "vilifying Mr. Clarkson." * They would add the sincere assurance of their hearty regret, that a single word which could be so interpreted has found its way into their pages; and their full determination to alter in the next edition of the "Life" every expression which he has pointed out as wearing that appearance. In all the goodly company who were collected around Mr. Wilberforce, they know of no second person who has thought himself excluded from that entire and affectionate respect with which they trust that they were naturally predisposed to treat their father's friends. Was it probable that Mr. Clarkson should be an exception to a rule which reached to every other case? The truth they believe firmly to have been, that from the date of that correspondence, which preceded their publication, Mr. Clarkson's mind was so possessed with the mistaken notion that he should be harshly and unkindly treated, that no possible statement of their case could have borne in his eyes any other aspect. This seems sufficiently established by one remarkable misquotation from those letters; for, as it was undoubtedly entirely unintended, it shows how strong

* *Strictures.*

was the bias which could lead Mr. Clarkson unawares into so strange a perversion of words which he had himself printed differently but a few pages back.

The history of that correspondence is soon told. When materials were first collected for the Life of Mr. Wilberforce, application was made to all his friends, and amongst the rest to Mr. Clarkson. But when the writers of the "Life" had entered on their task, it gradually dawned upon them, and was impressed by friends to whose judgment they most properly deferred, that to do their father justice they must protest against what had been commonly supposed* to be the general drift of the "History of the Abolition," and to follow up their protest by producing facts and papers, even at the risk of saying what might be disagreeable to Mr. Clarkson. Long were their consultations, and earnest was their desire to find, if possible, some mode of escaping from this necessity; but none appeared, and they resolved upon their line. As soon as this was determined, they felt it due to Mr. Clarkson's age and services, to let him learn at once from themselves the necessity which seemed imposed upon them. Of this therefore he was acquainted in Mr. Robert Wilberforce's letter of July 18. 1834, in

* This impression was undoubtedly confirmed by the position given to Mr. Clarkson's name in the chart which accompanies the "History of Abolition," — a position which, after being silently allowed to it for thirty years, is now happily admitted to have been an error of the engraver, and has been altered in the recent edition.

reference to which occurs the remarkable perversion to which we have referred as indicating that mistaken impression on the mind of Mr. Clarkson, from which no care could have withheld offence. The letter closes with an assurance that the statement of those facts, of which the claims of truth and filial duty required the expression, should be made "in a manner *as far as possible*" (*quam longissime*) "from all insult and unkindly feeling." How strangely is this unfeignedly respectful assurance turned by Mr. Clarkson into a declaration * that "the book was to contain *as little insult as possible*" (sic); and again †, to implying "that all insult could not be avoided." To that predisposition to receive offence which led Mr. Clarkson into this unintentional misrepresentation, the editors believe that many more of his "strictures" may be traced. They cannot but think that nothing else than this would have made the title of "agent," or "active performer" of that which it had before been said that he had helped to plan, so offensive in his eyes; or led him for a moment to suspect that an intended falsehood lurked under the evident inaccuracy, which, after a specific mention of his name, summed up the committee as being, all but *two*, instead of three, members of the Quaker body.

A like misapprehension pervades his account of the mode in which the editors made application for the early

* Page 37. † Page 9.

records of the Abolition Committee. The "Strictures" state (pp. 34, 35.) that, as one of two surviving members of the Abolition Committee, Mr. Clarkson was in possession of these precious volumes; that the editors discovered this; and, conscious of their meditated wrong to Mr. C., "had not the courage to ask a favour of him, and applied therefore through" Mr. Buxton.

The insinuation is without foundation. At the time of which Mr. Clarkson speaks, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Richard Phillips, Archdeacon Corbett, Mr. Macaulay, and other members of the Abolition Committee were still alive. By some of these gentlemen the writers were informed that the original papers of the Abolition Committee must be in the possession of the African Institution, to which the residual effects of the elder society had been made over at its formal dissolution about the year 1820. On their applying to this body for the loan of these precious volumes, the answer was, that "they had been lent to Mr. Clarkson and never restored." For this plain reason, and not for want of courage, the editors applied to Mr. Buxton, as a leading member of the African Institution, to obtain the books from Mr. Clarkson.

In this question the public has a direct interest. The volumes are not private property. They ought not to be left (as they at present are) in private hands: least of all in the hands of one so little able to appreciate their value as the tardily acknowledged carelessness of

their late or present possessor* shows him to be. The editors cannot but hope that Mr. Clarkson will see the propriety of reclaiming these volumes, and that, with the concurrence of the surviving members of the African Institution, he will store them among the national archives in the British Museum.

* It is perhaps needful to make good this charge. In the appendix, which Mr. Clarkson has unwisely suffered to accompany his "Strictures," it is coarsely asserted that an entry, quoted in the "Life," from the committee's journals, "is not in them." The inventor of the charge has been since compelled to retract his accusation, and confess that the passage stands just where the editors had said it did. There is no reasoning with such loose assertors. In spite of all that has been said, the editors wish, and have ever wished, to speak of Mr. Clarkson with the respect his services and age command. If the compiler of the appendix required any notice, it must be in a far different tone. There are some persons with whom no wise man of any character will enter into controversy—and such the editors deem this compiler. They cannot reply to a writer who at first insinuated that they had probably forged a letter of their father's, and who now implies that they have discreditably printed others because they are a "saleable commodity;" who distinctly charges them with "wilfully garbling" a whole correspondence; and who attributed to them the fabrication of an original document, because he was too habitually careless to find it, though its place was plainly pointed out. They cannot think it necessary to prove, that when Mr. Wilberforce supplied the Abolition Committee with copies of his letter on the Slave Trade at cost price, he was not receiving remuneration from a society to which he himself contributed. Above all, they can enter into no controversy with one who has dared to insinuate that Mr. Wilberforce affectionately promised services which he never intended to perform (p. 75.), and harboured and transmitted schemes of secret vengeance, where, for years, he simulated friendship (p. 89.). Such allegations are their own best corrective.

The second count in the charge of vilifying Mr. Clarkson rests upon the needless publication of the particulars of his pecuniary reimbursement. That in these five volumes there is no other instance in which the editors are even accused of pandering to the morbid curiosity of the public, is a *primâ facie* ground for supposing that there was some strong reason for their making this statement. The amount of their forbearance in all cases which are truly private can be known only to themselves. Mr. Clarkson himself would have no reason for satisfaction, could he have piqued them into publishing what they deemed it better to suppress. But the Abolition of the Slave Trade was a public matter. How the needful funds for its conduct were obtained, is a question of general interest, which must be answered in any complete history of that long struggle. So Mr. Clarkson seems to have perceived, since in the "History of Abolition" he expressly says that he felt it "a duty to divulge" the name of Mr. Whitbread as having incurred "considerable expense" in the cause of Abolition. The reviewer of Mr. Clarkson's work in the "Edinburgh Review" refers with great justice to this instance of "generosity," and expresses satisfaction at its publication. And could the biographers of William Wilberforce, whose purse was the first to be opened when the interests of the Abolition required it, be silent respecting his acts of liberality? No man had been more ready

with his aid. When in one instance the abolitionists were exposed to an expensive prosecution, the cost devolved on him as the ostensible head of the party, and so largely, that Mr. Clarkson supposed (erroneously) that he must have been indemnified by others. How could they, under these circumstances, submit silently to the full effect hereafter of Mr. Clarkson's selection, and allow posterity to gather that the aid which Mr. Clarkson received from the wealthier friends of the Abolition was confined to the honourable example of Mr. Whitbread?

But if Mr. Clarkson's reimbursement was to be mentioned, no other mode of mention seemed so proper as a guarded extract of such passages as told the story in the language of the actors. Let those who have condemned this publication remember all the charges it has brought upon the editors, and then say whether they could safely have spoken on the matter except in the very words of the original documents. They found themselves in possession of papers establishing an event of historical importance, which, if it had not escaped Mr. Wilberforce's memory, had to their knowledge never escaped his lips. They were to speak, therefore, merely from written information. They were to speak in the lifetime of those who were concerned in the event, but had avoided all allusion to it. Even as it is, the charges of falsehood and forgery have been darkly hinted against them. For these, indeed, they little care. Such is ever the reception of

unpalatable truths by minds of a certain class; only they must here protest, as utterly without foundation, against the allegation that any where or at any time they attempted to represent Mr. Clarkson as "hired" by the committee or by any one. They deemed it necessary to show, fully and throughout, the nature of their father's contributions, and to do this they judged it essential to show in this case what Mr. Clarkson received, and how he received it. There may have been attendant circumstances which made the details of this act of justice painful to Mr. Wilberforce, whilst they throw so strong a light upon his character, that they could not be suppressed by the editors. But they cannot allow that the mere acceptance of such reimbursement implied any thing injurious to the character of Mr. Clarkson. It could be no disgrace to him to receive what it was right in Mr. Wilberforce to offer. They solemnly declare, that the idea of representing Mr. Clarkson's zealous labours in this cause as having sprung in any sense, or in the least degree, from the desire or expectation of pecuniary remuneration, never for an instant visited their minds. They knew perfectly, and have never expressed the slightest doubt, that his energies were given to the cause at a sacrifice of private fortune, and without a notion of return.

Again, it is asserted in the "Strictures" that Mr. Clarkson's share in the Abolition struggle is every-

where suppressed. The charge is general, and the answer, therefore, must in great part be the same. The only particulars alleged are, first, the evident mistake of *two*, for three, in the general summary of the committee; secondly, that Mr. Clarkson is not stated to have been the originator of the Abolition Committee; and thirdly, that Mr. Clarkson is not mentioned as having been present at the last public meeting on the subject, over which Mr. Wilberforce presided. To these two instances, and to the general charge, the editors have one reply to make. They have not undertaken to write the History of the Abolition, but the Life of William Wilberforce. In keeping to this subject they did not, therefore, conceal what they should have stated, but only abstained from digressions which it was their duty to avoid. In the account of the meeting at Freemason's Hall Mr. Clarkson's name is not mentioned, but neither is the name of any one of the other "old friends of the cause," "all" of whom are said to have "gathered around Mr. Wilberforce."* Why should this complaint have been made by Mr. Clarkson rather than by any other of those numerous and respected friends, except from that peculiarity in Mr. Clarkson which was long since noticed in the "Christian Observer," then under the direction of Zachary Macaulay†, as having led Mr. Clarkson to be-

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. v. p. 317.
† *Christian Observer*, No. 169.

come his own biographer under the general title of Historian of the Abolition? Some of Mr. Clarkson's truest friends have not been induced by recent clamour to forget this truth. "What?" asked Mr. Southey, after critically reading the Life of Wilberforce, and giving to it the high praise that "it could not possibly have been better done," "What shall I say of Thomas Clarkson? That nothing of this sort would have happened if at the first he had followed my advice." That advice Mr. Southey goes on to specify as having been the professed publication of "Passages in Mr. Clarkson's Life," instead of a "History of the Abolition." Mr. Clarkson had been the foremost figure of the group in his own History of Abolition; the charge "*they do not notice me**" is really little more than a complaint that he is not equally conspicuous in the biography of Wilberforce.

One more charge remains: —

The claim, it is asserted, of priority of public effort in the Abolition cause is mistakenly put forth for Mr. Wilberforce.

The answer is simple. No such claim is made. The editors declared that Mr. Clarkson's public efforts were the earlier... They have never stated more, than that Mr. Wilberforce's efforts were not, as the "History" implied, the fruits of Mr. Clarkson's. This point they

* *Strictures*, p. 63.

have abundantly established. All they would now say, is, why they thought it worth establishing. Interesting as it must be, merely as a fact, to trace the first steps which led William Wilberforce to the great object of his life, they might not, for that interest merely, have run the risk of irritating Mr. Clarkson's just admirers. So far as it concerned Mr. Wilberforce's fame alone, it could matter little whether Mr. Clarkson's writings, or some other cause, first awoke his interest in this question. But it seemed to the editors of this Life that there were higher and more sacred truths at stake. The great cause of Abolition has too often been debased to the low level of a party contest. In their view it was a far nobler and holier cause. If, then, their view was right, it was of no trifling importance to sever it as far as possible from such alliances. Nor could this be more effectually done than by tracing up the efforts of the leader in the cause to the holy fountain from which they sprung — by showing that the true fear and love of God had breathed into the soul of Wilberforce this true, bold, and patient love of man.

In this view, how high an example do the pages of his life exhibit. They are the history of one endowed by nature with no usual portion of human sensibility, and fitted by intellectual superiority for great attempts. Even in childhood, a subject of more than national interest takes possession of his mind. In the first open-

ing of life, he has the opportunity of gaining such knowledge of its extent, as might have led him to devote to it the fortuitous endowments of influence and station. But the blight of worldly pleasure comes across this glorious prospect. At length a beam of sacred light bursts through the veil. Immediately his ancient impulse revives, and the youthful sympathies, which the atmosphere of the world had for a season stifled, shoot forth with all their natural strength. By a singular order of Providence, those whose acquaintance his religious wants prompted him to cultivate — Newton, the Middletons, Latrobe, Wesley — were all persons deeply interested and peculiarly conversant with the specific subject which had occupied his thoughts. After a short time he takes counsel with those public characters whom he was able to influence. He forms the resolution of bringing the monstrous enormity before the great council of the nation. At this very moment others meet him, who had been themselves preparing to bear their part in the same design. Their united efforts are harmoniously directed to this great attempt. For himself, no obstacle deters nor does any delay weary him, till, by the end of twenty years, the public feeling gradually attests the effect of his continuous and unceasing labours.

And is it possible to look on such a spectacle as this, and omit to do justice to that divine power, which dis-

played itself as the fecundating principle of the otherwise fruitless promise of human sympathy? And can this be done without tracing Mr. Wilberforce's resolutions to their real source? Would it not be the most wilful blindness to attribute to the accidental influence of a fellow creature, that which Mr. Wilberforce himself refers to its true source, in the providential intimations of the Great Father of all wisdom? "Surely never had I more cause for gratitude than now, when carrying the great object of my life, to which A GRACIOUS PROVIDENCE DIRECTED MY THOUGHTS."

The writers have to return thanks for some private communications on one or two subjects mentioned in the Life of Wilberforce, to which due attention shall be paid in a new edition. In particular, they feel that, from want of full information, they have not done adequate justice to the designs of Mr. Haldane for the establishment of a mission in the East Indies.

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CORRESPONDENCE

OF

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

RT. HON. WM. PITT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Burton Pynsent, Saturday, August 22. 1783.

Dear Wilberforce,

I hope you have found benefit enough from your inland rambling, to be in perfect order now for crossing the seas. Eliot and I meet punctually at Bankes's the 1st of September, and in two days after shall be in London. Pray let us see you, or hear from you by that time, and do not verify my prophecy of detaining us a fortnight, and jilting us at the end of it. We shall really not have a day to lose, which makes me pursue you with this hasty admonition. Adieu.

Ever yours,

W. PITT.

RT. HON. WM. PITT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Burton Pynsent, August 30. 1783.

Dear Wilberforce,

Your letter has relieved me from the two fears I have for some time entertained; the one of losing the

pleasure of your company, the other of being made to wait for it. I am very sorry for the state of your eyes; but I am quite of opinion that the air of Rheims is exactly the thing for you. I hope to find it equally sovereign for toothaches and swelled faces, which have persecuted me ever since I have been here, as if it was the middle of a session. We shall agree excellently as invalids, and particularly in making the robust Eliot fag for us, and ride bodkin, and letting him enjoy all the other privileges of health. He is to be at Bankes's certainly on the 2d or 3d, that is, Tuesday or Wednesday. I shall be there the 1st, and mean he should not bait more than one night if I can help it. Bankes will have some reason to quarrel with me; but I hardly see why you should come 100 miles from London merely to go back the next day. I am afraid of all unnecessary delays, as we shall certainly find no time to spare.

If you can meet with a very commodious carriage, I think you will do well to secure it; if not, we must take up with such as Monsieur Dessein will furnish us with at Calais. I direct this to the Castle of Wimbledon. If you do not come to Bankes's before we set out, leave word in Spring Gardens where you are, that we may be sure of you as soon as you arrive. I have heard some rumour of your having talked of embarking at Brighthelmston; but I assure you Dover is the place, especially as I must absolutely pass through London.

Yours most sincerely,

W. Pitt.

RICHARD PEPPER ARDEN, ESQ.* TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Lincoln's Inn, March 31. 1784.

Dear Wilberforce,

I received your letter, and you may be assured of every wish of my heart for your success if you stand for Yorkshire. God grant you health to go through the fatigue of being a candidate for such a county.

I wrote the moment I received your letter, to my father, desiring him to exert what influence he has in favour of Duncombe and you. I desired him likewise either to attend at the nomination himself, or send my brother if he is at home, and I hope he will subscribe handsomely. His estate in Yorkshire is not a very large one; but I think it will be in his power to be of service to you, and I cannot entertain a doubt of his good will. I have just kissed hands as attorney-general, and chief-justice of Chester. Every thing goes on well both at Cambridge and the world in general as to elections. Pitt, thank God, keeps his health and spirits amidst a series of fatigues which would make me mad.

I am, dear Wilberforce,

Your most sincere and affectionate friend,

R. P. ARDEN.

* Afterwards Lord Alvanley.

RT. HON. WM. PITT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Downing Street, December 24. 1784.

My dear Wilberforce,

I hope you will have received a letter I sent you last post, the chief business of which was to apprise you that the Reform must come on early in the session — I now think the time must be between the 20th and 25th of February. Since I wrote, I find that it is probable a meeting will be called before that time in Yorkshire, to renew a general petition, and in fact to support my proposals. It is impossible for me in writing, and especially in violent haste, to enter into all the particulars. I think a reasonable and generally satisfactory proposal may be digested; and I am working hard on all sides with a view to it. The idea with regard to Yorkshire seems to be what it ought, to procure as general a concurrence of the county as possible, and to steer clear of jealousies with regard to the Association.* Wyvill seems to suppose the business not very difficult; though some friends are unwilling to stir. The time of the meeting is likely to be the end of January or beginning of February. You may just have time to write; and your suggestions to *your party* (which, I believe, is not less numerous, in proportion, in Yorkshire than in the House of Commons) may be of great use. You will perhaps have heard from Wyvill about this; but I would not

* The Yorkshire Association.—Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 51.

delay telling you all I know; as your taking some steps may be very material, and it is of great consequence that the business should come forward in a proper manner.

Adieu: I must conclude, having no time for *foining*— I hope you have in abundance, and profit by that, and by being some hundred miles from as hard a winter as the last. You have left us an unreasonable while without any news of your motions; and I rather fear Aix-en-Provence is become an obsolete direction, but it is the best we have.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. PITT.

HON. EDWARD J. ELIOT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

1784.

My dear Wilberforce,

To begin in your own manner: "If" you think any of your friends here have not written to you because they don't love and esteem you, or because you have not been very much and very constantly in their thoughts since you went abroad, I must take upon me to say, for all and each of them, that you are most exceedingly mistaken, and doing very great injustice both to yourself and them. It would be needless to add that I am very anxiously longing for the time of your return to us, but, besides what is common to all the other *foinsters*,

there is a point or two on which I want particularly to talk to you.

Pitt has written to you lately, so I will say nothing of the reform of parliament except what has happened since, which is Wyvill's letter: I don't know whether you see any papers; but he says he has authority from Mr. Pitt to say, that he will exert all his power and weight, as a man and as a minister, to carry his motion into effect. These are brave words, and I think a sort of publication of secret influence, but I believe his authority did not extend quite so far as he seems to think it did; though Pitt has certainly taken due pains about it, and, I understand, sees much more reason to expect success than he imagined after Mr. Sawbridge's motion. The Westminster scrutiny, I fear, will not end, in any way, this year, especially if the session is to be as short as we are promised, for you are to know none of the managers will hear of the parliament's sitting after the middle of May. I do not quite believe what they say of their readiness; however, they are certainly very forward in their work, and our first lord does fag them confoundedly. The resolutions for the plan of settlement of trade with Ireland are finally drawn up, and I believe many of the tax bills are ready to be presented. In the mean while, Pitt has found time to be very civil and attentive to your favourite the Countess of Salisbury (Sally Salisbury). He dined there about five or six weeks ago, and, what is almost ridiculous, went to her twelfth-night ball, very much to the edification of the butchers and bakers of Hartford and St. Albans. Steele showed him about with great propriety,

and they became "sworn brothers to" several "leash of drawers."

P—— has been on a visit to E——, whom he found very happy on his 600*l.* a year, and *supposing* he should live within it. He is, you know, at a lodge of the Duke of Gloucester's, in Wiltshire or Hampshire. The old boy is thought to be still obstinate.

I hope to send you soon an account of my proceedings about a reader. Best compliments to your sister.

I am, my dear W., your ever affectionate

E. J. Eliot.

RT. HON. WM. PITT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Brighthelmston, September 30. 1785.

My dear Wilberforce,

I can hardly imagine (though perhaps from observation and experience you may guess) how it has come to pass that, by the simple operation of putting off only from one day to the next, I have been now some months without writing to you. By the date of my letter you will perceive that idleness has had more share than business in the latter part of this delay. I have been here about three weeks in the enjoyment of exercise and leisure, and eating and drinking; things which to me, from their antiquity, were nearly forgotten, and (as you know) must for that very reason have the charm of novelty.

The only interruption which has called me to town was to dispose of my sister, whom Eliot has taken into his possession, as you have probably heard from himself, if he has yet found leisure for the use of his pen. They are, I believe, perfectly happy (though after having had some family plagues to encounter); and this, you will imagine, contributes not a little to make me so. A vacancy has occurred of remembrancer in the court of exchequer, an office for life of about 1,400*l.* per annum, which I am to be a good deal abused for having given to Eliot. I think not justly, though perhaps a little plausibly; but which I shall have abundant reason to endure with patience. It will be obsolete history to talk of the fate of the Irish propositions. It is not forced philosophy which makes me look back to it as an issue (though not the best), yet, on the whole, far from bad. To have carried the whole triumphantly would have been the first wish: to fail without endangering the quiet of the country, and even with fresh security against partial innovations in the present state of our commercial relations; and to leave the business on a clear and honourable issue, to be resumed or abandoned as the real current of opinion in that country may direct, —ought to be second. And *that* I take to be the actual situation. It is said that there is a change of disposition already in favour of the system. But I receive these reports with caution; and though possibly it may one day be called for, I do not expect that day to be very soon. I hear of you at Spa, where (except for climate) you have, I imagine, your choice at once of all nations in a small compass; at least a collection of what your

friend calls *excellent specimens*, and which must resemble a little the forest in our *jardin* of "*les peuples végétaux surpris de croitre ensemble.*" I hope you profit by the waters, and that, in the mean time, it will be your principal care to select the best correspondences for the best wines from all the countries you hear of. I am going in a few days to Somersetshire to meet Eliot and my sister.

I touch at Bankes's in my way back, and shall then conclude my holidays with a fortnight more at this place. My scene of business is removed from Putney Hill to one in Kent, about fourteen miles from town, where I have just had the folly to purchase the most beautiful spot within that distance, and wanting nothing but a house fit to live in. A propos, we are all turning country gentlemen very fast; George Rose having just bought an estate in the New Forest, which he vows is just a breakfasting distance. The produce of our revenues is glorious, and I am half mad with a project which will give our supplies the effect almost of magic in the reduction of debt. It will be at least new and eccentric enough to satisfy your constant call for *something out of the common way.* Pray let me hear from you again very soon, and particularly how you do, and when you meditate returning.

Our session will not begin till the end of January, and will end of course by the 29th of April.

Adieu, ever yours,

W. Pitt.

RT. HON. WM. PITT TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Downing Street, October 20. 1785.
Thursday.

My dear Wilberforce,

I obey punctually the commands contained in your despatch of the 6th, which reached me only last night; and address this letter immediately to *Squire* Fectors. The tender and affecting subject which you have to negotiate, I reserve till we meet. I have only now to tell you that I am going on Saturday next, for the last time this season, to Brighthelmston, with Pratt and Apsley. Bob Smith and Steele are there likewise. I shall remain there till this day fortnight, being Thursday, 3d November, when I shall come to town for two days. On Saturday the 5th I mean to take possession (lest the opportunity should elapse) of Holwood Hill, near Bromley, Kent (the name and description of my new residence). I shall continue to give punctual attendance, every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, in Downing Street, and the rest of the week at said Holwood Hill, till the meeting of parliament. Did you imagine I should ever be able to give so exact an account of my intended motions for three months to come? At any of the three places, namely, Brighthelmston, Downing Street, or Holwood, I can answer for your finding a good bed, within the respective periods I have mentioned. Adieu.

Yours ever,

W. Pitt.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Coleman Street Buildings, 15th November, 1786.

My dear Sir,

You see, that when I asked your permission to write, I really intended to make use of it. After what has passed, and your kindness and freedom with me, it might seem formal to ask leave; but I might have been deterred otherwise, through a fear that you might make a point of answering my letter; and I should not be willing either to put your eyes to an unnecessary trial, or to break into your time, of which I believe you have little to spare.

When I consider you in the hands of the Lord whom you serve, and who will preserve you immortal till the service he has appointed you in this poor world is completed, I ought, perhaps, to be quite easy about you. Yet I hope the feelings, which I cannot wholly suppress when I think of those whom I love, though mixed with a blameable unbelief, are not wholly blameable in themselves. I conceive that the religion which is from above is not designed to divest us of the sensibilities and sympathies which seem to belong to humanity in its perfect state, and to be necessary to qualify us for the duties of social life, though it certainly ought to regulate them. I excuse myself in this way for a degree of solicitude I feel, to know how you performed your journey. I approve and admire your motive for the mode of travelling which you chose; but I could not help wishing that, in consideration of the infirm state of your health, you

had not obliged yourself to walk to the inn so early in the morning, nor to the hurry of a coach which goes from London to Bath in a single day. However, a line by your order from Mr. Cragg *, informing me that your health is not worse than when we parted, will make me easy, and, I hope, thankful.

And now, what shall I say farther? I am not willing to send you much blank paper, though it will not cost you postage. I have an inexhaustible subject always at hand, and yet am frequently at a loss how to fill up a letter; and, at present, while I write, a harpsichord is tuning in my ears, which does not at all help my invention. Methinks I may compare myself to a harpsichord. How often in tuning, how seldom in tune, and how soon put out of tune again. My imagination, in particular, is an instrument, which seems not in my own power: happy am I when it is under a gracious influence; but at times it seems as if an evil genius had the command of the keys; then I am tortured with a medley of folly, discord, and confusion, from which I cannot run, nor can I stop my ears against it, for it is within me. Wonderful is the grace that can cause the voice of joy and melody to be heard, when but a little before all was disorder and distress. If the Lord appears, the storm is hushed, and a calm succeeds.

I might have returned Mr. Lindsey's † Works with Dr. Blair's Lectures; but as you were going from us, I detained them till I should have the pleasure of seeing

* His secretary.

† Rev. Theophilus Lindsey. Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 76. and 129.

you again. I thought to put them into your own hands, and to take the liberty of expressing my wish that you would keep them under lock and key. You have a promising household, who I hope profit by your well-directed endeavours to promote their edification. I think Mr. Lindsey's are dangerous books to be in the way of your servants. I thought to read them myself, but it was a foolish curiosity, and I was obliged to stop when I had proceeded a little way in the second volume; for though I was sensible of the sophistry and effrontery of many of his arguments and objections, yet somehow my mind was entangled and hurt; and after I had put the books away, it was two or three days before I was composed again. Now, as I conceive there is no creature upon earth who would be more wretched than I if Mr. Lindsey's scheme could be true; and as, through mercy, I have for many years had no more habitual doubt of the Saviour's eternal power and Godhead than of my own existence, — it may seem strange that my thoughts could be hurt by any thing in Mr. L.'s power to suggest. But I had no proper call or occasion which might justify my reading him at that time; and poison is not to be trifled with; for it may injure a good constitution, even though a powerful antidote might prevent it from proving mortal. But the unexperienced and unwary are often hurt by the fine words and fair speeches of those who lie in wait to deceive; therefore, as I might incautiously have burnt my own fingers with Mr. Lindsey's books, I could wish for the sake of others that *noli me tangere* were written in capitals upon them all.

I take up my pen this morning for the fourth time since I began my letter, so frequent are my interruptions. I love retirement and leisure, and I was long favoured with them at Olney: London has brought me into very different scenes; but as I believe it to be the post which the Lord allotted me—which I did not contrive for myself, nor take a single step towards the procuring, — I am satisfied with it, and thankful for it. My apparent opportunities for usefulness are greatly enlarged; and this ought to be my first object, to which all personal considerations should give place—for I am not my own; nor was I brought from Africa, and redeemed from the bondage of Satan, to live to myself. If I may venture to say of the Lord in the apostle's words, *His I am, and Him I serve*, then I may cheerfully leave the how, the how long, and the where, and all circumstantial matters to Him: not that my appointment seems to call for much resignation; I am certainly honoured and favoured; I have many comforts at home, many kind friends abroad; my ministry is acceptable; I live in peace; and am mercifully sheltered from the storms of discord, animosity, and confusion, by which many are agitated. Can I even desire more? Such, however, is the ingratitude and inconstancy of the human heart, that it is no small mercy to be able to say, I have learned to be content, even in a favourable situation. You likewise, Sir, are in your post, and yours is a post of honour. Many, perhaps, who view you from a distance, envy you, and would be glad to change places with you: I love and respect you, but I do not envy you: perhaps you have less time at your own disposal, and meet with

more things in your path, which do not accord with your inclination, than myself. But if you are, upon the whole, where and what the Lord would have you to be, this thought reconciles you to the unavoidables which are connected with your situation; and I hope great usefulness to the public, and to the church of God, will be your present reward.

To you, as the instrument, we owe the pleasing prospect of an opening for the propagation of the Gospel in the Southern Hemisphere. Who can tell what important consequences may depend upon Mr. Johnson's* going to New Holland? It may seem but a small event at present: so a foundation stone, when laid, is small compared with the building to be erected upon it; but it is the beginning, and the earnest of the whole. This small beginning may be like the dawn which advances to a brighter day, and lead on to the happy time when many nations, which now sit in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, shall rejoice in the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

I suppose it will not be news to say that poor Mr. Unwin is laid up with a putrid fever at Winchester. So far Mr. H. Thornton and he were on their way homeward when this embargo stopped their progress. It has brought him very low, and it will be several days yet before the fever will turn, but I am very glad to hear he is not judged to be in immediate danger. Lord! what is man? and what is life? How soon may our prospects be clouded, and our plans disconcerted! But what a comfort to be assured that in this state of uncer-

* The first chaplain sent to New South Wales.

tainty our afflictions do not happen to us at random, but are all under the direction of infinite wisdom and love, and all engaged to work together for good to them that love the Lord.

My letter has been four or five days in hand, but I am at length near the bottom of the sheet. If I treated you with ceremony, I might keep it as much longer, till I had time to write a fair copy. But I find more pleasure in treating you as a friend, who will allow me to write without restraint, and excuse what is amiss for the intention's sake. Mrs. Newton presents her respects.

I am, my dear Sir,
Very sincerely,
Your much obliged and affectionate servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

FROM WILLIAM HEY, ESQ.

Leeds, 1786.

Dear Sir,

As you wished me to commit to paper some of the hints which I took the freedom to offer to your consideration when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Leeds, I now sit down to give you a very brief enumeration of the topics I touched upon.

Since it is impossible to preserve religion invariably in any time without interruption; and since the corruption of mankind is constantly operating, so that the best societies degenerate, it seems the most prudent method, while the church is in a spiritual state to form

a public liturgy and ritual, and to guard against the intrusion of the heterodox by a scriptural formulary or confession of faith. A church formed upon this plan has a suitable mode of worship for the devout, while religion flourishes in any place; it affords support and comfort to the pious minority, when the bulk of the people and the minister are not in a state of religion; and it proves a great help to any religious minister who may be employed in a place where few righteous are to be found.

Those congregations who submit the whole of public worship to the skill and abilities of the minister, may do very well while blessed with an able and pious man: but when the minister is unsound in his principles, and irreligious in his conduct, the people have nothing to make their public worship a spiritual service, unless the Word of God be read, or some devout hymns sung, which have gained the favour of the people by long use.

The power of patrons is grievously complained of by democratical congregations; and while the people remain devout, it would be happy if they could always choose their own minister: though they would not always choose the best, they would at least keep out the heterodox and profane. But what must be the case when the people themselves are fallen away, which will certainly happen? They will then choose such a minister as suits their corrupt taste; and their recovery is, therefore, past hope; for God does not take any other method than the ministry to recover bodies of men. A dissenting congregation that hath once deserted the truth and purity of the Gospel, seems to be lost for ever:

this is not the case where the choice of the minister does not depend upon the people.

Experience confirms this reasoning. The nonconformist ministers were certainly in a more religious state than the majority of the clergy in the last century. They set out with every advantage at the close of that century; the act of toleration giving full liberty to constitute their churches on what they thought to be the most scriptural model. But what has been the consequence? Socinianism (another word for infidelity) has overrun them; they are departing with the greatest speed from the purity and truth of the Gospel. In this part of the kingdom almost every old dissenting congregation is Socinian — York, Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, Bradford, &c. Their form of worship and church government is the sole cause of this defect: they allow it, or rather they boast of it; but, instead of thinking it a defect, they glory in it as a great excellency.

If then (through the invariable corruption of mankind) every dissenting congregation will in the long run become Infidel, or Socinian if you please, it deserves our attention to use the best means to prevent the evil consequence in those who now are united to the church of England.

To prevent this, as well as to benefit the people immediately, let every pious clergyman unite his people into firm Christian society, as fast as he is enabled to awaken and convert them to righteousness; let this union be such as will most effectually attach them to the church, as well as to each other. Let every such

minister remind his people that they must soon be deprived of his help, and will probably not obtain a successor of like mind: direct them to prepare for this event; show them how to conduct themselves under it: teach them to keep themselves as a spiritual phalanx against all their enemies, waiting patiently and praying earnestly for another spiritual minister; but by no means leaving the fold before the shepherd arrives. A little reflection will point out the properest method of uniting the people upon this plan: and if once the people are well instructed in their privileges, it may be reasonably expected that one revival of religion would hardly be extinct before another would be begun. Our excellent public services afford great helps for such a plan.

By such a method the pious clergy would begin to see their own importance, and would more abundantly rejoice in the work of the Lord: their people would the more value them, and profit by their labours; and a holy seed would be scattered, that might in time fill the land. At least, this is doing all that human prudence, directed by the Word of God, can effect.

The irregularity of the means used to carry on the late work of God in this land, has given a cast even to the most regular of the spiritual clergy: they have caught the contagion of irregularity, and the church of England seems to be little better by their labours: the righteous are perpetually swept out of it. The clergy would make themselves a more respectable body (I speak only of the evangelical ones) if their conduct was more consistent with the rules of their church; if

they strove more to inspire their people with a love for their public prayers and church order, and lead them to cultivate communion with God in a way that would not detach them from the church they profess to serve.

This, my dear sir, is the outline of the reasoning I used, and the plan I suggested. To enlarge, by way of proof or illustration, on every part, would fill a volume instead of a letter.

I profess myself a member of the church of England on the most deliberate consideration, yet I think myself happy in having some prejudices in its favour. Its defects, and such there are in all human institutions, are hereby lessened; its excellencies made more forcible. I am convinced that the Word of God has left no complete plan for Christian worship or church government, yet has commanded both, and has forbidden us (as individuals) lightly to break established customs. I see the traces of episcopal authority in the New Testament much more clearly than that of an equality of ministers; but I could submit to the church of Holland or Scotland, was I a Dutchman or a Scot, being persuaded that nothing is a lawful ground of dissent but the requirement of something sinful. I am not required to do any sinful act in order to preserve my union with the church; therefore I durst not leave it, though it had some imperfections. However, I rejoice that many of its offices are of the purest kind — strict copies of evangelical truth and purity.

The grand argument urged by the dissenters, on which the whole turns, is this, — that it is an infringement of the authority of Christ to make those things

necessary which he has left undetermined. This, I am thoroughly persuaded, is a fallacy. It is done by every church under heaven. No Christian society can possibly subsist without it. No public worship, nor church government can be had without uniformity in order and rule — such order and rule is not to be found in the New Testament. *Ergo.*—But I must conclude.—May God bless you in all your labours. May it please God long to preserve our present privileges. I hear that the disaffected clergy are likely to make another attempt to destroy our excellent articles, &c. May He that sitteth above laugh them to scorn!

I am, in Christian affection
and sincere esteem, yours,
W. Hey.

[These letters are inserted as illustrative of Mr. Wilberforce's statement concerning the cause of Mr. Pitt's pecuniary embarrassments.]

ROBERT SMITH, ESQ.* TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Saturday, Brighthelmston, 1786.

My dear Wilberforce,

Indifferently as I thought of our friend's domestic management, I was not prepared for such an account as the box contained. The first article in Mr. Wood's paper, 7914*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.* old bills unpaid, P—— could not have been apprised of, or at least could not have recollected, when he told us, that being about to

* Afterwards Lord Carrington.

receive three quarters of his salary, he should have enough to pay all the tradesmen.

I hope you will immediately procure these old bills, and that, for his sake, they may contain the demands of more tradesmen than those you have sent me, which I am sorry to say are deficient in so many material articles, that any general conclusion taken from them as to the amount of his expenses of housekeeping for last year, will prove fallacious.

The necessity, however, of bringing his affairs into some better order is now so apparent, that no man who is attached to his person, or values his reputation, can be easy while he knows it is undone. I hope, therefore, that you will be able to make P—— thoroughly sensible of the necessity of an immediate reform, not with a view to save money, but to retrieve his affairs. To carry the measures for this purpose into execution, it is necessary he should see the evil in its full extent, and what the consequence must inevitably be if he should continue his present domestic administration.

I have looked over many of the bills. From the manner in which they are made out, the butcher's particularly, it is impossible to say any thing precisely about them, but that the extravagance surprises me. For the meat is sent in in great quantities, without particulars being mentioned. On a Saturday there is generally three or four hundredweight. To-morrow I will write again; in the mean time,

I am, my dear Wilberforce,

Ever yours,

R. Smith.

ROBERT SMITH, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Sunday.

My dear Wilberforce,

After I wrote last night, I employed myself in examining the first month's bills, viz. January, 1785. It is necessary to know how many persons there were in his family during that time: but I can scarcely conceive a private house in the kingdom where such a quantity of provisions, as are charged, could be consumed. It must also be recollected, that this month of January, 1785, parliament sat; and, therefore, he often either dined out, or was prevented making that meal regularly at home.

Inclosed is an abstract of each week's expense, together with the general amount of the whole month.

The butcher's bill only is 96*l.* Can it be possible that 3800 pounds of meat could be dressed in twenty-eight days, which (if on an average it cost 6*d.* per pound) must have been the case. The poulterer's, fishmonger's, and indeed all the bills, exceed any thing I could have imagined; and the charges are in general much higher than I pay.

It may appear ridiculous to speak of the expenses of my own family in comparison with P——'s; but when I have had company in the house at Hampstead for a week together, and have had every day as good dinners as my cook could dress (perhaps there were from thirty to thirty-five in family) the butcher's bill, at the highest, was 6*l.*, and the baker's 2*l.* Now though P——'s bills ought certainly to be a great deal higher, yet when they come

to be from 20*l.* to 25*l.* for meat only, I cannot help suspecting much imposition.

The same extravagance seems to me to go through the whole. In October, when he was away the whole time, the butcher's bill is 40*l.*, and ten pounds of tea is drunk.

That you may perceive the truth of these remarks, I have inclosed in another cover one week's bills, viz. the second week in the account ending January 29th, which I preferred to the first week, because that may be considered as something extraordinary on account of the queen's birth-day. You will judge whether the consumption of so much provision could have fairly taken place. I brought a book with me for the purpose of carrying on the account through the year, in the manner of the inclosed paper; but so many bills are wanting, that it would be imperfect, and Wood seems to have done them very regularly in months.

I find myself much better, but by no means strong enough to encounter London at present. Mrs. Smith desires her love.

I am, my dear Sir,
Very sincerely yours,
R. Smith.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MISS ——.

London, 22d February, 1787.

Indeed, my dear ——, I trust you do "wish to be right," and on that ground you may justly be congratulated: so long as you preserve this frame of mind all will be well. This is the perfectness and simplicity of heart mentioned in Scripture with expressions of peculiar approbation: and that tenderness of conscience that humility and watchfulness which accompany it, admirably dispose us to walk through this scene of temptations as pilgrims and strangers, who are seeking a better country in constant dependence on God's grace through Christ, and looking for the guidance of that good Shepherd, who kindly promises that he will carry the lambs in his bosom and gently lead them that are with young. These are figurative expressions, but they are not unmeaning ones; we should translate them into common language and carry them about with us as the Eastern nations do their amulets and charms. Be not discouraged if you do not find your doubts so thoroughly eradicated as you flatter yourself they are; many good men, though in the main and unshakenly convinced of the truth of Christianity, have been grievously harassed by them, and I believe they are often the suggestions of the Tempter, which neither reason nor Scripture give us any rule to distinguish from the suggestions of our own imagination. These objections are often not particular, or directed to any one specific point, but it is rather a

general sort of stupid doubting whether the whole be not a delusion. Perhaps the best way of combating the enemy is to fly from him in speculation and fight him practically. I mean when our reason on a fair inquiry has been once convinced, let us determine to act as if these things were true, and (such is the constitution of the human mind) we shall gradually find these incredulities dissipate, and obtain a more settled and deep-rooted satisfaction that "they are not idle fables."

Never forget that Christ Jesus is to be made unto His people wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: were we ever to bear this in view and act on it, how much more wise and upright and holy should we be. It is pride and self-dependence that ruin us; whereas, were we to look with stedfast eye to the author and finisher of our faith, we should learn to despise both the pleasures and the griefs of this life, and long for that blessed day, which; disencumbering the people of God from their fleshly impediments, shall introduce them into that state of glory of which Christ died to purchase for them the everlasting possession. When you have any thing to say, write: I know you will give me credit for thinking of you, though you do not hear from me, and therefore I shall be silent or not, as suits my convenience.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MISS WILBERFORCE.

London, 30th March, 1787.

My dearest Sister,

You desire an answer by return of post, therefore though much hurried, I cannot delay writing to you.

I consider your doubts as the effect of bodily complaint rather than a refusal of assent to the truth of Christianity; though satisfied they again recur with undiminished force, and so they will continue to do, and you must be prepared to expect and learn to disregard them. Perhaps the best way of ridding yourself of them is to act as though they did not exist; and I think they afford not sufficient ground for your absenting yourself from the Communion. In receiving the Lord's Supper we make a public profession of our being willing to risk our all on Christ and to appear before our Maker, relying on His merits alone for our favourable acceptance with Him; we also solemnly devote ourselves to His service, and declare that we will endeavour to live to His glory, as those whom He has purchased, &c. Now in all this you could join from the bottom of your heart; and if fears and hesitation and doubts distract you, remember the poor man in the gospel, "Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief." At all events, however, do not distress yourself in debating whether you shall communicate or not, but comfort yourself by the assurance of Christ that His yoke is easy, and that the pure in heart,

they who are simple in their views and mean honestly, shall be blessed. Perhaps I may see you before Easter Sunday: I find our vacation is to be five or six days longer than I was aware of: Milner is very indifferent, and I could like to be a little with him during the recess. You also enter into my plan, and perhaps you would meet me at Cambridge or somewhere, and tour it for a few days. I think the scheme might be of advantage to all of us: but all is at present undetermined; let me know what are your feelings about it without a moment's loss of time.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

REV. WILLIAM MASON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Aston, April 2, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry that you took the trouble of using your eyes in writing to me on such a trifling occasion. I solicited you by Mr. Duncombe, purely that I might not put you to that expense of eyesight. I hope, however, as you make no complaint on that score, that you are now better than when I had the pleasure of seeing you at Aston. I will only say that the person whom I recommended, having been long in the Custom-house service, and grown into years, with a numerous family also, might be a proper object of advancement, if any additional officers (as were expected) should be made in that department. I did not look so high for him as

to the office of a landwaiter on the present establishment.

The word establishment leads me by a very natural epistolary connection to the great ecclesiastical question which has so lately been agitated in Parliament, about which I have not been so solicitous as perhaps I ought to have been, but which I think has been decided in the best way it could. It is certain, or in parliamentary phrase I am free to say, that the majority of those who enjoy the first honours of the establishment, and possess its greatest emoluments, do not act in such a way as to do that establishment all the credit that they might; and it is equally certain, that those who are ambitious of obtaining the same honours, do it generally by means which tend equally to its discredit; yet discredited as it is, even to make me almost ashamed of my profession, I think it better than no establishment at all, and that I am of opinion it soon would have been, if this as a previous question had been carried. On the other hand, there appears now to be so strange a change of tenets in a great part, if not the principal body of the Dissenters, and their teachers disseminate certain opinions so boldly (I had almost said blasphemously,) that I think they have little right to find more than toleration from those who have the power to prevent their having it; if to those considerations be added those enthusiastic notions and extreme Calvinistical doctrines which others propagate with so intemperate a zeal, and in so irregular a manner, it seems to me that the present moment is, of all others, the most unfit to hazard a change of the present existing laws on this subject. But

as I know not how either you or your colleague voted on the question, I am perhaps calling another important matter into question — videlicet, the wisdom of my representatives: be this as it may, I will not affront the candour of either of you by making an apology. I shall be sorry if the part Mr. Pitt has taken in this business should in any degree hurt him as a minister: it cannot do that without hurting the dearest interests of those who may be the most offended at him, for I am persuaded that the motion originated from one who made the Dissenters only the cat's-paw of his own ambition — I do not mean Charles Fox, though he alone will reap all the popularity, if any popularity can be gained by it.

I who have no double knocks at my door, may be, perhaps, excused for being doubly noisy with my pen when I write to a friend who has. Therefore I am hugely prompted to add to this long letter a few short stanzas which I writ on a late occasion, though they have no other merit than that of coinciding with a sentiment which you delivered in parliament; that merit, however, I am vain of, or else I should not trust them out of my bureau, though with a strict injunction of your not letting them out of yours: their publication would hurt certain persons, whose friendship, though I have lost, I still esteem too much in any sort to offend.

TO MR. PITT, ON HIS CONCLUDING HIS COMMERCIAL TREATY, 1787.

When thy great sire, on that bright car of state
  Which now thou guid'st, taught Britain's foes to feel,
Th' attendant Muse remark'd how Holles sat
  A fluttering "fly on Glory's chariot-wheel."

Still from the putrid mass which bred that fly,
New insects rise, which buzz and aim to sting;
To stop its course the dusky phalanx try,
And 'gainst its fervid axle scorch their wing.
Proceed, sage youth! and long that car command:
Thy father's fame with thine, fair truth shall blend.
His vigour saved from foreign foes the land,
Thy prudence makes each foreign foe a friend.

The fourth line, I must hint to you, alludes to an epigram published at the time, which concluded with the following fine line, —

"A fly of state on Glory's chariot-wheel."

The Duke of Newcastle imputed this epigram to me, and I believe never forgave it. I did not however write it, nor could ever find out who did, though I always suspected it was Dr. Akenside. Adieu, my dear Sir, and believe me with great sincerity,

Your most obliged
and faithful Servant,
W. Mason.

P. S. — As Mr. Duncombe has never written to me since I pestered him with two letters by two succeeding posts, I hope he will come to make his apology in person ere this reaches you. Any man but myself would have come to town to attend that affair, as it is certainly what the world calls of great consequence to my property. I trust it with you and Mr. D., and am sure if any thing can be done you will do it.

J. HAWKINS BROWN, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Edinburgh, Monday Morning, June 18th, 1787.

Dear Sir,

As you desired me to give you an early account of my journey, I will not go further than Edinburgh without troubling you with a line.

After I had the pleasure of seeing you on Thursday se'nnight, Mr. Dempster called to postpone our journey, but as I was ready to set out, I took the opportunity of visiting some friends in Northamptonshire and Derbyshire, of seeing the manufactories at Sheffield, and some parts of the West Riding, which were new to me, and meeting the party I was to go with at Harrowgate. There is an Icelandic philosopher, a professor of Copenhagen, who is an amiable ingenious man, who is to go the whole journey with us; he has generally been my companion in my chaise. We stopped to see Durham Cathedral, and spent some hours at Newcastle, and easily overtook the coach party, Mr. and Mrs. Dempster and Miss Ferguson, a niece of Sir Adam's; but we travelled quite as fast as I desired, having all my time filled up.

We reached Edinburgh soon enough on Saturday to see a great deal of a very beautiful town, wonderfully improved and improving, and in a most romantic situation. The two days we stay here will enable us to see all the objects, which far exceed my expectations, and several of the principal people who are in Edin-

burgh; but those who spend only their winters here have left it, except the lawyers.

We had three of the lords of session to sup with us last night; we finished our supper without candles, though it was ten o'clock. One of the company was Lord Monboddo, who was describing London, from whence he had just returned, at seventy-six, on horseback all the way. The inferiority of London, and every city in Europe, to Edinburgh was universally admitted, though my friend, the professor, put in a word in favour of Copenhagen.

The company, who were numerous, were inquisitive about our speakers in parliament. Lord Monboddo said, Pitt *spoke*, Fox *barked*, and Lord North *screamed* and *groaned;* he added, that he had no conception of such a man as Pitt's rising in modern times: he really spoke as Demosthenes and Cicero wrote; he spoke in periods and in language in which no other man could either speak or write.

The Sheffield people I saw were much pleased with the commercial treaty. All the politicians I have happened to meet with, disapprove of that part of the king's speech which relates to Holland, and are alarmed with the idea of our involving ourselves with the dissensions of the Dutch. I hope the expressions in the speech are so guarded, as to be incapable of the constructions many persons are disposed to give them. I hope and believe, that the ministry are fully convinced of the value of peace, to preserve which seems the universal wish of the country. But no measure can be attended with more happy effects than a mediation on our part,

which, without endangering the public tranquillity, may preserve Holland from falling into the hands of France, and put a stop to the dreadful calamities of a civil war. We shall reach Inverary by Saturday at farthest. As breakfast waits, I can only add how much I am sincerely yours,

J. H. BROWN.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO WM. HEY, ESQ.

London, 22d June, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I beg leave to introduce to you my friend Mr. Beaufoy, *not to be convinced of the impropriety of his late motion on behalf* of the *Dissenters* *, but with a wish that you will be kind enough to introduce him to our friends in your neighbourhood in my name, that he may see and obtain all the information he desires respecting the manufactures of your part of the country. He is a man whom I really esteem and respect highly.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

* For the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO REV. E. FREWEN.

Bath, 31st July, 1787.

My dear Frewen,

As my last letter required an answer, I should be a little surprised at my not having heard from you, if, knowing from my own experience that one is always most backward in discharging epistolary debts when there is the most leisure for that employment, I had not, very naturally, attributed your silence to the circumstance of your college labours being at an end for the summer, which makes you an idle man: but though this state of vacuity, as Dr. Johnson would call it, has operated to my disadvantage in one respect, I hope to profit from it in another: I am about to spend a month or five weeks, or thereabouts, in company with my mother and sister, either by the sea-side, or in touring, or both. Now (we know each other well enough to blurt out our proposals *sine ambagibus*) . . will you join our party? The first effect of this proposition is to make you rise from your chair and take two or three turns across the floor: well, that being over, and a certain look that you give a person for a minute or two in silence before you open upon him, I hope your first answer will be a loose expression of good disposition towards this scheme; in which case I will trust to the merit of the project itself for gaining you over completely. I mean to quit this place in about ten days (observe my month or five weeks is from and after that period); within that time you could probably arrive here,

and I can find room for you in my lodgings, arrive when you will; but if you cannot be here so soon, I would write to you at any place you might appoint, to fix on some other rendezvous; though, as the scene of action with us will most likely be either the West or Wales, Bath is so little out of your way to the one or the other, and affords such opportunities of conveyance to every part of the world, that perhaps you could not do better than steer your course to it in the first instance; at all events let me hear from you by return of the post, because I shall back my sails, and use other sea artifices, to give you time to come up with me.

As for my objects in the expedition, they are fresh air, and exercise, and ease: but the idea of business is not quite excluded with me. I shall carry books, and I hope read them. There is a pleasure in the society of friends with whom one is on so easy a footing, as that both parties may be either solitary or social at will, without fear of offence, or even condescending to give a reason for the preference. I have asked little Cookson to be one, and it is not quite impossible but that old Milner will also *addere pondus.* This is throwing additional weight into the scale, and I hope will turn the balance in my favour, though before it might be trembling on the beam. The post is this instant going off. I can only just say adieu.

Yours, very truly,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO ROBERT SMITH, ESQ. [afterwards LORD CARRINGTON].

Plymouth, 4th September, 1787.

My dear Bob,

When you last wrote, you intimated an intention of visiting the Rhine; it is far the best lion in the neighbourhood of Spa; but to enter fully into the merits of the beast, you should have been in our circumstances, who, after being jumbled almost to a jelly by incessant travelling in post-chaises, felt a double pleasure in gliding smoothly down that majestic river. I am leading a rambling life as well as you. My mother, sister, and an old Johnian acquaintance or two joined me on my leaving Bath about three weeks ago, and since that time we have been lounging about the southern coast of Devonshire. It is from Plymouth that I now address you.

I assure you, that nothing I ever saw pleased me so much as the sights of this place and neighbourhood, where within one little circle is collected almost every interesting and beautiful object in nature; nor is it possible without a sensation of gratitude towards Him from whose bounty we derive all our comforts, to enjoy the numberless conveniences and luxuries one meets with in our own country in so superior a degree, and to behold the universal aspect of wealth and plenty that prevails, and the abundance of whatever tends to the accommodation of life. I know your heart too well to doubt your having often sympathised with me in this feeling; but if I mistake not, you will be more than ever

sensible to it after your continental tour, though you will not visit any of those parts which are calculated to call it up in its full force.

We arrived at Dartmouth the very day after poor Holdsworth was carried to his grave: his youth and family situation with a wife and five little children could not but bring you to my mind, and the recollection that but about fifteen months ago we entertained apprehensions on your account. I believe and trust that by care you will re-establish your constitution, for which you have a good security in the knowledge and perfect comprehension of your disorder; and it is my earnest prayer that you may be long a comfort to us in this life, and at length quit it for a better. Another friend of mine, for whom, indeed, I had the highest esteem, though we had not spent time enough together for the establishment of a warm personal affection, has been lately hurried out of the world by a putrid fever; his name was Baynes *, of Gray's Inn, a special pleader, who was soon to be called to the bar, and with every hope of success in his profession that could be founded on an excellent understanding and great application; but besides these intellectual accomplishments, he had more simplicity of intention and steady honesty than almost any man I ever knew: except Pitt, I scarce know any one from whom I thought the public might, perhaps, some time or other, receive so much advantage.

The wandering way in which I have been of late has prevented my hearing any news; but it is possible I may have a letter to-night, and I will keep mine open till

* Vide Dr. Parr's Works, vol. iv. p. 567.

then, that if I learn anything worth telling you I may insert it. I hope Mrs. S. improves from change of air, and does not suffer greatly from the filthiness of continental inns. Adieu, my dear R. I am ever most truly and affectionately yours,

W. W.

Ask Mrs. S. if she does not find the foreign money productive of great confusion in her accounts.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO J. HAWKINS BROWN, ESQ.

Bath, 14th September, 1787.

My dear Sir,

I have been about writing to you ever since I received your letter, which may be now about two months since, and have no excuse to allege for my silence; for as to my having nothing to say, I am going to show you that I do not reckon it a sufficient reason for holding my peace, because it never could have operated with more force than at this moment, when I give a practical proof that I do not admit its validity. One cause, however, which has prevented you hearing from me is a doubt where I should direct to you, on which head I endeavoured in vain to obtain satisfaction from your domestics at Abingdon Street. I fancy, though in the progress* of things we may hope, that Taber Murray and Loch Torridon will resound with the busy hum of men, that

* Mr. Hawkins Brown had visited Scotland, on behalf of a Society formed for the encouragement of fisheries in the Highlands.

they are not yet conspicuous enough to have attracted Mr. Palmer's * notice, and that a letter addressed to you at either of these stations might have wandered in quest of you into any part of the world where the distributor of packets might conceive you were passing your summer. I scarce think he would expect to find you among the Western Isles of Scotland.

I am impatient to learn the result of your tour; and shall be glad to hear that Dr. Anderson and Mr. Knox have not painted in too strong colours the natural advantages of the stations in question, in which case we may entertain a well-grounded expectation of substituting comfort and plenty in the room of wretchedness and want, and materially benefit the national interests, as well as add to the stock of private happiness; notwithstanding Dr. Smith, with a certain characteristic coolness †, observed to me that he looked for no other consequence from the scheme than the entire loss of every shilling that should be expended in it, granting however, with uncommon candour, that the public would

* Manager of the Post Office.

† Adam Smith had visited London in the spring of this year, and been introduced by Mr. Dundas to Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, &c. They met frequently; and one day the conversation turned on Dr. Johnson's visit to Scotland. "Some of our friends," said Adam Smith, "were anxious that we should meet, and a party was arranged for the purpose. In the course of the evening I was seen entering another society, and perhaps with a manner a little confused. 'Have you met Dr. Johnson?' my friends exclaimed. 'Yes, I have.' 'And what passed between you?' Immediately on my being introduced, he addressed me, 'Dr. Smith, how came you to say that Hume was nearly the best man you ever knew?' 'Because he was so,' I answered. 'Sir,' he replied, 'you lie.' 'And what,' said they, 'was your answer?' 'Sir, you are the son of a bitch.'" This example of Adam Smith's "characteristic coolness" can only be preserved by retaining his own coarseness of expression.

be no great sufferer, because he believed the individuals meant to put their hands only in their own pockets. When you write have the goodness to let me have what intelligence you can supply me with without too much trouble. Your last letter amused me not a little. I hope you supported your Icelandic friend, when within the walls of Edinburgh he had the hardihood to put in his claim in favour of Copenhagen; I imagine your party maintained, though you do not mention it, that Edinburgh was not only the finest, but also the most populous city in the world. Be kind enough also to inform me when you mean to be in London. The project which I started to you at our last meeting is going forward, and is in such a state that I trust it will have an existence as well as an essence, according to the logical distinction, by the beginning of the winter. It is needless for me to say that I am anxious it should meet with your countenance, and indeed I have no doubt of its doing so; I assure you, my dear Sir, with perfect sincerity, that I should proceed in any undertaking with additional confidence and pleasure, when associated with one of whose understanding, integrity, and character, I think so highly as I deem of yours; but of this business no more at present. You know that I am no great scribe, and my eyes admonish me to lay aside my pen. I obey the suggestion, assuring you that I am always,

My dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P. S. I take it for granted you are returned out of the North, and therefore shall address this to you in

Shropshire. Direct to me in London, whence my letters are forwarded to me wherever I am rambling. If you happen to be out of the way of political intelligence, you may not be sorry to hear from me that my last account of the state of public affairs, as far as Great Britain is concerned, were extremely favourable.

SIR CHARLES MIDDLETON, BART. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

26th September, 1787.

My dear Friend,

Mr. Pitt received your letter while I was with him. I am perfectly satisfied with his intentions towards me; and having produced a precedent of an admiral serving as a comptroller, it will, I believe, be acquiesced in. This office, my dear friend, in its present state, is too much for any one to manage; but as Mr. Pitt is sensible how necessary it is to have a person used to business in it, and prefers me, I shall certainly do what I can. How easy would it be if all heads were like Mr. Pitt. I have the pleasure to say from what I have already seen of him, that he will equal, if not excel, his father, as a war minister. But unless the heads of all executive offices are good, he will be disappointed.

Ever affectionately yours,

CHS. MIDDLETON.

Not a moment to spare.

P. S. I cannot send you Mr. Pitt's note, but my continuing here is fixed.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MISS ———.

Cambridge, 8th November, 1787.

My dear M.,

It gives me pleasure to observe that, though you chide me for not letting you hear from me, you allow me credit for such a sincere concern for your welfare, as not to impute my silence to forgetfulness. Indeed, you do me no more than justice in this acquittal: for whether I tell you so or not, you are daily in my thoughts and prayers.

What is it in truth that you have avowed, but that you have not attained to that stability of mind which you desire, that in spite of the value and brightness of the heavenly prize, you find yourself perpetually drawn aside from the pursuit of it by temporal objects. We are all of us apt to be unreasonable in our expectations of the progress we are to make in the Christian course: ere we have well begun our journey, we look on ourselves as at the end of it, and deem it hard if we enjoy not those comforts which are reserved for those only who have borne the burthen and heat of the day; in both these respects let us be more moderate, and neither be cast down if we find not our attainments equal to our wishes, nor disgusted if our religious exercises do not afford us all that pleasure which we might hope to derive from them. But then let not this produce in us such an acquiescence in our present state as may terminate in our sitting down contented with it: we must learn to press forward, humbly depending on God's

help for the success of our labours and resigned in all respects to His sovereign will: persevere; and "may the God of grace, when you have suffered awhile, comfort, strengthen, 'stablish, settle you." I need not suggest to you the benefit of religious contemplation, or how much more than reading it tends to lift the soul beyond the fogs and vapours of this nether atmosphere.

The precise question which you put to me is of great nicety: and if it had been put to me by almost any one else, I believe I should have declined answering it in any other than those general terms which you forbid me the use of. "How far you may indulge in amusements without danger?" With respect to these same amusements, I conceive no rule can be prescribed of universal application and use — none that will solve to every one the several cases which occur in life, under the very different circumstances of different men; and yet, unless we lay down for ourselves beforehand some determinate principle of action, when the time for decision comes we shall be at a loss how to proceed, and, judging hastily and under an improper bias, our conclusion will most likely be erroneous. What then is to be done? What but that every one read his Bible with simplicity of heart, that he there observe the temper and conduct our Saviour prescribes to His disciples, and then, looking into and weighing the particulars of his own state, discover how he may best acquire the one and practise the other. Where any thing is directly contrary to the laws of God there we ought to resist as stubbornly as possible. . . now the playhouse seems to me to fall under this description; and in order to possess you with my

sentiments on this subject, I will enclose you a little Essay which contains almost all I think, and will spare me the trouble of a recital . . . but there are other diversions of a more dubious nature — balls, concerts, cards, &c. It is impossible here to judge for another; in certain situations it may be expedient to partake of them, rather than offend those with whom you may be living, &c., but not as amusements to be enjoyed, but temptations to be undergone. It is easy to see that the whole current of Scripture sets against that disposition to seek for our comforts in the vanities of life and the enjoyments of sense, which is too natural to us all: it directs us to pleasures of a more exalted kind, to joys of a superior nature; and therefore that systematic balling, and concerting, and carding, is really adverse to the spirit of Christianity — observe, I say systematic, for it is reduced to a system: it is not an occasional but a constant and habitual misapplication of time and money, and, what is worse than all, of affections. But then we are not to abstain from these indulgences in which the world allows itself, and value ourselves on our abstemiousness, for that will bring on a proud and a morose spirit: the true way is, to endeavour to supplant the fondness for them by the love of better things, "to let our rejoicing be the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world," to learn to delight in the consciousness of His protection whose favour is better than life, and in the anticipation of those pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore. Could we arrive at this blessed temper, what mankind terms

amusements and diversions would be to us either tedious or disgusting; and though on some occasions we might deem it expedient to conform, yet we should do it for the sake of others, not for our own. Of all others, it is perhaps the most dangerous practice for us to draw a line, and as it were *pale in* some of the common amusements in which we may judge that we ought to participate from such prudential motives as I am alluding to, and then to go on in the constant use of them in unsuspicious security: the habit of mind this brings on is very destructive indeed of the vital spirit of Religion, and should be guarded against with all care. Now, were I to say, "You may safely play at cards or go to the Assembly," &c. would there not be a danger that, set at ease as it were by my permission, you would look on these, if I may say so, *as fair game?*

I have said enough to make you understand me: the Christian's motto should be, "Watch always, for you know not in what hour the Son of Man will come." In proportion as you may find yourself compelled to engage in diversions you may not thoroughly approve, examine yourself with more diligence, be more constant in your devotions, act like one who, fearing that poison might lurk in his daily food, guarded against its effects by the daily use of antidotes. Remember that it is the great business of Religion to purify our hearts, and inspire us with a more entire longing for those perfections, which are to constitute the glories and happiness of our future being. . . .

BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH [DR. SHIPLEY] TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Chilbolton near Andover, 12th November, 1787.

Sir,

The visit you honoured me with in the summer, and which I thought much too short, discovered to me so much that I ought to admire and esteem, that I could not help indulging, perhaps the unreasonable hope of your future acquaintance. And in order to make myself less exceptionable, I had determined in my own mind never to ask a favour of you. But upon seeing in the papers the resignation of Sir Elijah Impey *, sure it is not unreasonable to wish that Mr. Pitt might be reminded that Sir William Jones has all the talents, abilities, and virtues the wisest minister could wish for in the man whom he destined to fill so important an office. Lord Ashburton, when Sir William was first appointed, took leave, as he told me, to assure his majesty that he was not only fit for the office, but that he was the only one that was fit. His conduct in office fully answered the warmest hopes of his friends. His diligence and application to business were unequalled. He was the first English lawyer who was able to examine an Indian witness. He was the first Englishman that could administer an oath with such an attention to their national scruples and superstitions, as to force them to acknowledge it to be obligatory. You will easily perceive how much the common administration of

* Chief Justice of Bengal.

India must have been affected by these two circumstances. Let me add the very superior knowledge he is allowed to possess of the Indian language, manners, and literature — the institutions he has founded, and the spirit of inquiry he has raised in a part of the world where they have been hitherto unknown. And perhaps he is the first that has taught them that any thing valuable is to be got from their connection with England.

These are the circumstances that ought to recommend Sir William Jones to Mr. Pitt *, with a force far superior to the interested recommendations of men in office. Sir William has an enlarged, active, and liberal mind; and your great friend will seldom have the opportunity, by promoting a single man, of doing so signal a service to his country and to mankind.

I am, Sir, with the highest respect and esteem,

Your most obedient

and most humble Servant,

J. St. Asaph.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY [DR. MOORE] TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Lambeth House, November 14, 1787.

Dear Sir,

I left Sir John Skynner yesterday morning. He had received your letter, and we had much conversation on the subject of it. I wish I could make a better report

* Docketted by Mr. Wilberforce, "Answered that I had mentioned. Recommended him to Pitt."

of the result than I am able to do. He had not entirely made up his mind. When he has he will write to you; but I confess I do not promise myself that he will be of the committee.* Approving much of the good design, and without a doubt about giving his name towards the encouragement of it, he seemed unwilling to decline taking a more active part in the committee, and yet afraid to take it. The idea of the considerable degree of responsibility, which I had supposed would strike him, did so; and, when I mentioned the Master of the Rolls as a sharer in it, his remark was that probably he would be a judge, and incapable of acting, in a very few months.

Another observation he made on reading the names of the committee, was, that it did not appear to him desirable that there should be any ecclesiastics except the bishops.

I have the honour to be, with the truest regard,

Sir,

Your humble Servant,

J. CANTUAR.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MISS WILBERFORCE.

26th November, 1787.

Your letter, my dear sister, has been in my thoughts at intervals ever since I received it, and I take up my pen to reply to it with no little reluctance; but I am sure you will expect my answer with anxiety, and it

* Of the Society for Enforcing the King's Proclamation.

would be unkind and selfish to delay it any longer. I well know the tenderness of your mind, and it grieves me to say any thing that will wound it: nor do I suffer less from the apprehension that I am about to give pain to my dear mother. How can I but do so, when I recollect the many proofs I daily experience of her kindness and affection, and, above all, that I am indebted to her for the first of human benefits; for, to the blessing of God on those religious principles and impressions which she instilled into us in our early years, it is to be attributed that I see the vanity of all the pursuits of this life, and with somewhat of a humble hope, through the mercies of my Redeemer, look forward to a better. Yet in spite of all these considerations, I must speak out: the appeal you make to me is too forcible to be resisted, and when I reflect that I shall have to account for my answer to it at the bar of the great Judge of quick and dead, I cannot, I dare not, withhold or smooth over my opinion. I must be as expeditious as possible; you know I have generally enough to do, and at this moment I am particularly pressed to prepare for the opening of the session to-morrow.

In one word, then, I think the tendency of the theatre most pernicious. This is my decided sentiment, not taken up lightly, but on mature consideration. I have not leisure to state to you at large the grounds on which it rests, and it is better not to take up the question than not to do it complete justice. The bias under which you have weighed it is evident from the arguments you urge, which are unworthy of your understanding. You are sensible that it is not enough that your own prin-

ciples and frame of spirit are so settled, as to be in no danger ... though which of us can say so in such a case, seeing that we pray to be delivered from evil only on the ground of our not being led into temptation, which it is a mockery of God to ask, if we run into it with our eyes open. You view the matter in the light of example, yet you talk of going only to one or two plays, and of not staying the farce, &c.: why, how will the generality of those who see you there know your motives for not being as frequent an attendant as formerly, and for not remaining during the whole performance? It would be an affectation of humility to deny that your authority has very great weight in the town of Hull, and it may be thought too that my advice has some influence over you. Will not, then, your presence at the amusements of the theatre sanction them in the minds of all who see you there? At that day when a strict account shall be taken of all our actions, and when it will not be the least inquiry, how we have used our credit and influence amongst men, may not the players have to allege that by your attendance they were countenanced in their exercise of a profession, which must be allowed to be highly unfavourable to their future happiness? May not the same be said by some young unguarded people, who, forgetting the Scripture precept to avoid the beginnings of evil, there yielded to propensities, and formed connections, and acquired habits, which terminated in a dissolution of the moral principle, and finally in their irrecoverable ruin?

Where we do not think things perfectly defensible in themselves, there is an essential distinction between the compliance of omission and that of commission. For

instance, I had much rather abstain from attending the place of worship I might most of all wish to frequent, than go any where where my presence would give a sanction to something actually and positively wrong. Suffice it to have hinted at this difference, of which I think you will see the force.

Yet after all this, as I have the highest sense of the duty of obeying a mother's commands, and of gratifying a mother's wishes, I cannot, if my mother makes a point of it, absolutely advise you not to give way: but I know my mother too well not to be assured, that whatever she may have said or thought on the first suggestion, she will not make a point of it on more cool deliberation. Sensible as I am to the integrity of her mind and the force of her affection, I am convinced she would not insist on it or press it strongly, but under the idea of your not suffering from the compliance; whereas I am equally convinced it would be a source of lasting uneasiness to you. I trust my dear mother will do justice to the motives which have compelled me thus to express myself, for I would not conceal from her what I have said to you. I shall be extremely anxious to know how she feels and you determine.

With respect to our meeting in the winter I bear it in mind, and shall be glad if it can be accomplished. I am almost clear I cannot go farther than Cambridge from the House, and I would not draw my mother from home. I shall be very glad to hear that Mrs. S. accompanies you; I think of her much, and often with extreme solicitude. O! my dearest sister, how glorious a change will it be, if ever we all meet beyond the reach

of all those chances and accidents to which we are exposed in this uncertain state of existence, and with hearts overflowing with gratitude towards that Saviour, who so loved us that He gave Himself for us to suffer death upon the cross; if we enter into the possession of that happiness which knows no limit of degree or duration: and may our connections be so formed, as to be thus continued beyond the grave, that with those whom we most affectionately regard and value, we may dwell for ever, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore!

May God Almighty bless you, my dearest sister, and calm and tranquillise your mind here, and conduct you to happiness hereafter.

W. WILBERFORCE.

LORD MUNCASTER TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.*

Sunday, February 11th, 1788.

My dear Friend,

It has pleased the Almighty God to take unto Himself the little angel spirit of my dearly beloved child. At about half-past nine last night his eyes were closed for ever. Praised be God, who so far graciously heard my prayer; he quitted this world without a convulsive pang or painful struggle. His little mind perfectly clear, and, till within a very few moments, his articulation good — it became weaker gradually, and less distinct, and his breath gently lengthened and had intervals, as if nature

* Docketted "Poor Muncaster, truly pious and pleasing."

paused. It was at last so soft, that the ear mistrusted itself, and in the succeeding moment his pure spirit flew up, and he appeared rather to cease to live than to die. It was the soft transition of innocence from this to a state of perpetual rest and felicity. God of His mercy support me under my sufferings, and enable me to bear them with all due resignation to His divine will. I kiss the rod, but in truth it scourges me sorely. Heaven preserve you from every misfortune, prays your disconsolate friend,

M.

THOMAS STEELE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Treasury, April 30th, 1788.

My dear Wilberforce,

I thank you for having accepted my offer of service, because it looks as if you gave me credit for sincerity. I do in truth pique myself on being somewhat more punctual than my neighbours, and I will endeavour to prove that I am so, in order to encourage you to apply to me in future. I shall venture to pack up three dozen of my own claret, because it has been reckoned by all who taste it to be very sound good wine, though not of the highest flavour: but I wish you would consent to have six dozen instead of three, in which case I will apply to Dundas, whose cellar very deservedly is in high repute; and I should hope that, between us, we may be able to furnish some wine that will suit you.

We triumphed exceedingly in the division of last night*: 220 to 169 was a much greater majority than the enemy supposed we could muster; and in truth it is a frightful question. They talk of repeating it, but I hope they will not. Grenville made the best and cleverest speech I ever heard him make. The opposition did not like the question, though they made every exertion for the purpose of toad-eating the Independent† Club; the consequence was, that neither Pitt, Fox, nor any of the great guns were fired. Adieu, my worthy honest friend: may you be restored to us in such a state of health and spirits as you ought to enjoy, and as we all most anxiously and earnestly wish to see you in possession of. Believe me to be ever yours,

Most faithfully and truly,

T. W. STEELE.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

London, September 12th, 1788.

My dear Sir,

I heartily thank you for your favour of the 6th instant, and for the very obliging terms in which you write. I have nothing to return but expressions of respect, gratitude, and affection; but they are honest, and dictated by my heart, and therefore I hope will not be unacceptable to you.

* On Mr. Bastard's motion for censuring Mr. Pitt's Naval Promotions.

† *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 31.

Wednesday, last week, we went to Blackheath and staid till Saturday: while there your letter came; so that I had an immediate opportunity of mentioning you to Mrs. Wilberforce*, and reading her a part of it. She spoke of you with great regard, and seemed to wish to hear from you. She is waiting the Lord's hour of deliverance with a spirit remarkably composed, and seems neither weary of life nor afraid of death.

It comforts me, indeed, to think that I am remembered by you in your best hours. How ought this to bind me to pray for you! In this way Christians may be mutually beneficial to each other; whether weak or strong, wise or illiterate, in public or in private life, they are upon the same level before their common Lord and Father, with whom there is no respect of persons. Yes, Sir, you have many praying for you, and among them not a few who are really fervent in prayer, and have the liberty of children at a throne of grace. It is hoped and believed that the Lord has raised you up for the good of His church, and for the good of the nation. This makes you truly a public person, and gives you a place in the hearts of many who never saw you, and whom you will never know. But *I* feel, as I ought, a peculiar interest in all that concerns you; not only because I have the honour and pleasure of your personal acquaintance, and am indebted for many instances of your kindness, but especially because you were pleased to make me the first acquainted with the Lord's goodness to you. The joy that I felt and the hopes I conceived when you called on me in the vestry at St.

* His aunt.

Mary's, I shall never forget. From that hour you have been peculiarly dear to me; the seeds of regard for you which were then sown in my mind, have been flourishing and strengthening ever since, and I trust will continue to flourish, while I am capable of remembering any thing.

There is a tax upon your situation, and you feel it. I could wish you the same liberty, with respect to the employment of your time and the choice of your company which I enjoy myself, but I know in your path it is impracticable. I am sorry your prospect of retirement* has been so much interrupted, but the consequence is pleasing; you see a necessity for forming your future plans differently. It is thus, as I formerly hinted, the Lord teaches those who wait upon him the way in which they should walk; not directly and at once, by advice they may receive from others, or by rules they may, *à priori*, lay down for themselves, but gradually by experience. The knowledge they thus obtain becomes properly their own, an inward principle, and therefore efficacious. Though the wisdom which we ask of God is freely given, yet with respect to the way in which we obtain it, we may be said to pay, and sometimes to pay dearly, for it. Yet it is well worth the purchase, whatever it may cost us. If the heart be upright and the desire to serve him be simple and genuine, the main thing is secured, and these hinderances will eventually prove helps; and even the slips and mistakes we may make, will tend to make us walk more firmly. There

* Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 183.

are innumerable cases in life to which the general rules in Scripture do not directly and explicitly apply, nor will books of casuistry afford us satisfaction. But love is the best casuist; and a sincere desire of pleasing God, by degrees, by the result of our own reflections, and by repeated approximations, will lead us nearer and nearer to that middle path, which lies between the extremes of needless singularity and improper compliance. Communion with God is the great point: whatever is found to have a tendency to damp or indispose our spirits for this, must be either frankly given up, or, if continued, it must be a cross or a burden, which we verily believe it is His pleasure, all things considered, that we for the present should bear. People of indifferent health, and who heartily wish to be well, are led by their feelings to form a regimen, and abstain from many kinds of food, not from the idea that they are unwholesome in themselves, but because experience proves that such diet will not agree with them. In spirituals we are all valetudinarians, liable to be hurt by a breath of air; and many things which might be harmless if we were quite well, are found to have an aptitude to nourish our disease. Such is the analogy between body and mind, that we cannot long be comfortable in either without an habitual self-denial.

I think Mr. Simeon knows two persons whom he thinks proper, and who are willing to go to Bengal. And I know one or two men who would think about it, if there was an actual opening, and they had due information of the nature of the service. If the Lord favours the design, I little doubt but He will prepare

and point out suitable instruments. I suppose it is not necessary that the whole number of eight should go at one time. As to the Pelew Islands, if we could send them a missionary by a balloon, it might be well. But I hardly know how to wish that government should attempt to form a settlement among so simple, untainted, and kind a people. I could almost wish they might never see another ship, unless one in distress and wrecked like the Antelope should give them a fresh occasion of exercising their generous hospitality. Alas! what a ruined people will they be, if *we* make a settlement upon their shores, to communicate to them wants and vices and diseases, to which they are at present happily strangers.

Your letter mentions nothing of your own health, and therefore does not contradict my hope that you are pretty well. Nor do you say a word about your return to London, but Sir Charles Middleton told me once that we might expect you in October, which will soon be here. How glad should I be, were it possible, to hide you a few days in Coleman-street-buildings! May the Lord bless you, my dear Sir, and make you a blessing. I hope I shall never give you reason to think of me otherwise than as

Your most obliged, obedient,
and affectionate servant,
JOHN NEWTON.

RT. HON. W. PITT TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Downing Street, Tuesday, September 23d, 1788.

My dear Wilberforce,

Being at Holwood yesterday, I did not receive your letter in time to answer it by return of the post. I write now to say how happy you will make me by giving me some days there, and to beg you to execute your intention as speedily as possible, not only because the leaves will not resist wind and rain on the top of my hill much longer, but because I shall probably be going the end of next week to Somersetshire. Grenville has been at Lord Fortescue's for some time past, but I expect him in a day or two. I am in hopes by the time we meet, we shall have some fresh materials respecting the African business.

Ever yours,

W. PITT.

RT. HON. W. PITT TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Holwood, October 14th, 1788.

My dear Wilberforce,

I well knew what the kindness and affection of your mind would feel for Eliot and myself.* I have had the comfort of finding him, on my return from Somersetshire, beginning to recover a little, and I have left my

* On the death of his favourite sister, Lady Harriot Eliot.

mother as well as I could venture to hope. I will add no more, for I am sure I need not say how sensible I am to your friendship on this sad occasion, as well as on every other. Prettyman has sent me your letter, mentioning the curate you have found * for New Holland. I will take care of the business, and let you know as soon as the stipend, &c. is fixed. I conclude he will be ready, if he takes the charge, immediately.

Pray let me know what your notions are, when you have fixed them, and how soon there is a chance of seeing you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. Pitt.

THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Burton Hall, November 12th, 1788.

My dear Sir,

I should have felt much solicitude on your account if you had come to the late meeting † unrequested by me; but as it was at my pressing instance that you took so long a journey, I am still more anxious to hear how you got back, especially as I thought your staying two days after the meeting at York did you visible harm.

* Vide supra, p. 15.

† A meeting in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution, which had been unexpectedly originated by the Whig party at York, and which Mr. Wilberforce had been summoned from Bath to attend.

I shall be very happy to have these anxieties done away by a good account either from Bath or London. From the latter place, however, I suppose I shall have your answer, as in the present alarming situation of the King's health, Mr. Pitt will naturally wish to have some of his best friends near him. Another post may put an end to all the hopes we have entertained of seeing the finances of our country re-established and its constitution improved under the administration of Mr. Pitt. Under the ministry likely to be in power in a new reign, there is but too much reason to fear the reverse of this.

I shall be at Copgrove on the 19th and for two days after that, if you should have occasion to write to me on any sudden change, which is much to be apprehended; by that time our fears will either be dissipated entirely, or they will be confirmed by the certainty of the king's death. In all possible changes, believe me, my dear Sir,

Affectionately yours,

C. WYVILL.

DUCHESS OF GORDON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Gordon Castle, November 17th, 1788.

The newspapers inform me you have left the peaceful woods and wilds of Windermere, for the less pleasing scenes of political bustle. I hope the fair Hygeia is in your train, and that neither the cares or duties of a

London life will frighten her back to the nymphs and naiads of the grove. Perhaps in some of your trips from town you may visit Cambridge. Huntly is now a member of St. John's. It was you taught me to know that that college can form a mind with every virtue, and every talent that learning or philosophy can bestow. But it is his hour of social intercourse I am most anxious about: pray do let me solicit your friendship and protection for him — he will do you honour as a man, for his heart is without a fault: at the same time I have some doubts as to his application, and I dread still more a kind of playful wit he possesses, that makes gay dissipated company more pleasing than those his better judgment would approve of. Tutors in general give instruction like a task: few have the happy art to mingle the useful and the agreeable together, though every body is sensible that knowledge acquired by conversation is infinitely the most pleasing. Books may awaken new ideas, but it is hearing different opinions that leads reason to judge and form just conclusions. I once intended writing to the Premier, to beg he would recommend him, but thought it might be improper in his situation; if you do not think so, show him my wishes, as I should like of all things that my beloved boy went under such happy auspices.

Your admirer, Dr. Beattie, was making many anxious inquiries about you. Ten years ago he wrote upon the humane subject, that has lately interested you — I mean the slave-trade — for the humane subject can be no explanation to one who "does a vast of good," as the poor man at Windermere told me. I wished Dr.

Beattie to publish, but he said the arguments had been all brought forward by others; he is to send them me, and if you have any desire to read them, you may command them. Charlotte and I have had many delightful rambles through the unexplored part of this romantic country, but my mind is so occupied with the dreadful event that seems to hang over this nation, that I can write or think of nothing else. The all wise Director of events may give us such another king, but for some time we must fall in the eyes of all Europe, for nothing but experience will convince surrounding nations that Great Britain is the same.

Charlotte sends her very best wishes.

Ever yours,
J. GORDON.

RIGHT HON. W. PITT TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Downing Street, December 8th, 1788.

My dear Wilberforce,

I am very glad to learn that you think the springs of Bladud have been of use to you. Your regimen is, I hope, accompanied with a little good eating and drinking, in the efficacy of which I have a good deal more faith. I am perfectly well in health, and have the satisfaction to see Eliot on the whole gradually mending, though it is still very slowly, and I fear is likely to be so. He is going again into Somersetshire in a few days,

and from thence, for a short time, to Cornwall. Lord Camden, from the glimpse I have had of him at St. James's, seems returned perfectly well, and brings an exceedingly good account of Lady Bayham. I am going to-day into his neighbourhood, and shall find an opportunity of seeing him, and letting him know how the world has gone in his absence. The period has indeed not been full of events, and the principal supposed object of our councils has existed only in the Morning Herald; I mean the abandoning the scheme of Botany Bay, which, on the contrary, is approaching fast to its execution. The particular part of it about which you inquire, has been some time arranged to the entire satisfaction of your poor curate, who has an advance sufficient for his outfit.

Pray remember me most particularly to Bob Smith. I rejoice much in the many good accounts we have had of him from different quarters. Every thing is settled for your friend Wood to come in at Minehead, which I am very glad of. I received your second letter yesterday, and will answer it seriously and speedily in a post or two, but I have not a minute more at present.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. Pitt.

RT. HON. JAMES GRENVILLE* TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Conduit Street, May 6th, 1789.

My dear Sir,

It is not possible for me to be angry with you for playing the truant in the country, especially if you bring back with you thence a store of better health; but if you cram your chaise with a mass of rough materials of parliamentary manufacture, and with as many papers as would furnish a county register under Lord Stanhope's act, I fear that your quiet is not without an alloy. When you appear on this stage, you must always expect *to be scrambled for.* The landholder, the manufacturer, the canal man, the turnpike man, the iron man, will each have a pull in his turn; amongst these the miserable rabbit puts in his claim to your notice. What he now asks is perfectly just and reasonable, viz. the protection of the present laws; and that, as King James's act legalised all places which had been occupied for the breeding of rabbits, previous to the passing of that act, according to the same precedent all warrens of a certain annual value should, in like manner, be legalised to the time of passing the present act; a single clause will accomplish this purpose. The attorney-general has not hitherto made his report to the petition which was referred to him by Mr. Pitt; but neither Mr. Pitt nor

* Afterwards Lord Glastonbury.

the attorney (with whom I have conversed on the subject) see the slightest objection to it on the part of the crown or of any other person; and the attorney has promised me to make his report without delay.

I must now beg you to be assured that I have not troubled you with this narrative on account of any personal interest whatsoever belonging to myself. I am no warrener, and I cannot boast of a single rabbit in the whole schedule of my property; but I have a friend or two in Lincolnshire for whom I interest myself, who are very much concerned in this business; so far therefore, and no farther, it concerns me.

I have ventured not only to open, but to read likewise the greater part of the bloody volume to which you refer on the slave trade. I have read it with horror, and this horror is considerably increased by a conviction that the evil is incurable: it is indifferent to me whether an Englishman or Frenchman be the criminal trader: you may certainly transfer the crime from one to the other, but this is no radical cure, and the oppression will still be exercised to the same extent; but I agree at the same time that the not being able to do every thing which we wish to do, is a bad argument in favour of doing nothing.

I am, my dear Sir,

Ever most faithfully yours,

J. Grenville.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Palace Yard, June 14th, 1789.

Nay, my dear Muncaster, I can now contain no longer; but in spite of hurry, of lassitude, and of weak eyes, I must reply to your kind inquiries. I believe you and I are tuned in the same key, as the musicians speak, and that we strike therefore in unison. Is it a proof of it that I feel your pouring out to me your joy in the prospect of a visit from your father, as a stronger proof of your affection, and consequently demanding my more grateful return, than all your expressions of solicitude about myself. To make me thus a partner in your joys is truly kind; and you do me no more than justice in believing I shall participate in them. And now I am ready to end my letter in the East Indian fashion. What can I say more? I dare not enter on the long budget that presents itself to my mind, and I am afraid of being drawn in, if I tread but for a moment on some other ground that lies open to me.

Luckily in this dilemma enters old Matthew, with tidings that my carriage waits. Adieu. Believe me, ever most sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Pitt's gout is really *bonâ fide* gout. He is better to-day, but will hardly be able to get down to the House to-morrow. Best remembrances to all at the great hall — small and great. Ever yours sincerely.

LORD MUNCASTER TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Muncaster House, near Ravenglass, October 29th, 1789.

My dear Wilber.,

Upon Monday last I put into execution what I mentioned to you in my last, and assembled the whole neighbourhood around, and at about halfpast two Lady Muncaster and myself set forward at the head of the principal families in the neighbourhood, followed by a prodigious concourse of people, to lay the foundation-stone of the pyramid I purpose to erect, to record the king's happy return to his people, the nation's love of him, &c. When we got to the ground (which is upon some table-land in my far park, where I think you and Milner once rode to look at the view which is prodigiously extensive, commanding the whole country, and from whence you may see Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales, &c. &c.) two cannon were fired to announce the ceremony being about to begin. A large circle was immediately formed round the place, and in the centre of it stood my faithful, trusty Atkinson, who with most audible voice proclaimed the purpose of our assembling: when he announced it, there burst from the whole multitude such a shout of "Long live the king," as seemed to rend the very air. The foundation-stone, which was a huge one indeed, was now surrounded by the several masons and workmen who were to fix it, and every gentleman and lady present placed upon the spot where it was to be laid coins of the king, which done, the stone was

let to fall and cover them; cans of beer, . . for about half a dozen large barrels of stingo were carried thither for the purpose .. were filled for all to drink, "May the pyramid stand for ever," with three times three; and a wonderful shout it was. *Trusty* then got upon the foundation-stone and sung "God save the King," with the additional stanzas to make it applicable to the moment, which I send you herewith. Then followed another discharge of beverage, to "Long lives to their Majesties, with uninterrupted health," &c. &c. The cannon immediately were fired several rounds, and the echoes were uncommonly grand and fine. The carriages were now brought, and we all returned to the Old House, where above three hundred sat down to dinner; and more mirth, loyalty, and heartfelt felicity for the time were not, I will venture to say, experienced under any roof in Christendom, than under that of Muncaster House, for the remainder part of that day. We were most fortunate in our weather — the day was a delightful one; and the people on the different surrounding hills — the sublime and magnificent features of Nature among which we were assembled — the rolling echoes thundering amongst the mountains — the loyal and joyful acclamations of the people — formed a something altogether more interesting and striking than I can possibly describe. I mean to have a room within the pyramid, which I shall furnish with portraits of their Majesties, and with all the publications, &c. put forth upon that memorable occasion. Who knows but for ages hence this work may become a matter of useful record to posterity!

I have felt an additional motive besides the loyalty I feel in my own bosom, and my general sense of the conduct of particular persons upon that occasion, to erect this pyramid at the present juncture, because I now stand absolutely the only public man in this whole county, who acts with government; for Lord Lonsdale's conversation, with that of his agents, respecting the minister Pitt, . . . whose abilities, they say, are gone — drowned absolutely in wine; the king's health a mere delusion, and his relapse daily to be expected; the Prince of Wales the best of all young men, and the prince and he the very best of friends; and the Duke of Portland become the first toast at his table . . . all this clearly denotes him, in fact, whatever he may be in appearance, an opposition man; therefore, every man here, the Dukes of Portland, Devonshire, Lords Carlisle, Egremont, Duke of Norfolk, Lord Lonsdale, and the members for the towns and county, are all opposition people. The people, by the reports spread of the impossibility of the king continuing well, have been led really to be as anxious in their inquiries of me after the true state of things above, as at this period last year; and they firmly believed every post the confirmation would be received of his Majesty's having relapsed to be as bad as ever. I have therefore, I say, felt an additional wish in this matter, to do away the abominable endeavours to damp and destroy that loyalty and attachment in this part of the country, which I have the felicity to know has been again awakened. . . . .

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

November 7th, 1789.

My dear Muncaster,

Though it be a labour to me to keep my pen in hand, having been obliged already this morning to use it till I feel nervous and tired, yet I cannot refrain from acknowledging the arrival of your last letter; and when you call on me to participate in your festivity, my feelings, used to sound in unison with yours, cannot refuse a note or two of sympathy. I am sure your eyes must have glistened on the 26th of October, and the whole must indeed have formed a truly splendid scene; the grandest, I dare say, to which old Scafell ever was witness. As for your inscription, I honestly declare to you that I cannot bear your perpetuating that pompous sentence of Thurlow's, whom you know to have been throughout on the point of putting out as long a tail as the veriest rat in either house of parliament; and whose conduct, if ever it be made public, must cover him with confusion; — meanwhile, you who are enlightened, though it may not be incumbent on you to remove the error, should at least not strengthen and confirm it. The reports concerning Pitt which you mention are indeed scandalous, but they do not surprise me: experience has taught me what to expect from a certain quarter, and at least, therefore, I shall not be disappointed.

I was much amused with your report of the proceedings at your late county meeting, and can see with

my mind's eye some of the most conspicuous actors in that day's drama. It was in my contemplation to see our friend Harry, but I could not conveniently effect it. With great difficulty having drawn my mother out of her own easy chair, who finds an easy chair every where when once she is come forth, I am spending a few days with her at Sam Smith's, who desires, by the way, his remembrances to you, and who well deserves to be remembered. I mean, if I can, to call on Cookson at his living, but have promised, if possible, to pass some time at Holwood before the meeting of parliament. Direct always to London. My ladies join me in kind regards to your fireside.

I am ever faithfully
and affectionately yours,
W. WILBERFORCE.

REV. DR. COKE TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

City Road, London, August 24th, 1790.

Sir,

I received your most kind, condescending letter, for which I return you my most grateful thanks.

Inclosed I have taken the liberty of sending you an account of the present state of our missions in the West Indies for the benefit of the negroes.

There is one point I feel a desire of touching upon, assured that your candour will excuse my further intrusion on your patience. Some have said (from the

steps I was unavoidably necessitated to take on the continent of America, or entirely abandon that work) that I would, if possible, separate the whole Methodist connection in England and Ireland from the established church. I do assure you, Sir, upon the honour of a gentleman, and (which is in my view, and also I am confident in yours, abundantly greater) on the solemn word of a Christian, the assertion is utterly false. I not only wish for no such thing, but would oppose a separation from the establishment with my utmost influence, even if that, or a division in the connection, was the unavoidable alternative.

Pardon this liberty, and permit me to subscribe myself, with very great respect, Sir,

Your much obliged and very obedient
and faithful servant,
THOMAS COKE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO W. HEY, ESQ.

Yoxal Lodge, November 3d, 1790.

Dear Sir,

Your packet reached me in safety, and I forwarded its inclosure to Mr. Brandreth. I rather take shame to myself that one cause or other has continually intervened to prevent my writing to him respecting the books which he kindly undertook to distribute for me. On the whole it now seems to me best, and you must

give me credit for many and good reasons which I will not trouble you to read nor myself to dictate, that you should negotiate the matter for me with Mr. Brandreth, either sending him such books as you shall think most advisable, to the amount of five guineas; or by desiring him to supply himself with them, you furnishing him with a list for that purpose; or by his purchasing, to the above-mentioned value, according to his own discretion. You must make all necessary excuses for me.

I do not well know what reply to make respecting Mr. Marsden.* Your account is not very favourable; but, as I know you are no flatterer, I take it for granted things are not worse than you represent them. I shall most likely have an opportunity of learning the state of things in London in about a fortnight, and you shall then hear from me again.

I inclose you a scheme (of which, on second thoughts, I may as well send you several copies), on which Mr. Gray and I have determined for the County Election Book. It explains itself, and therefore I need make no observations; only that I do not wish the names of any persons to be inserted, whose supposed real property is less than 100*l.* per annum, or personal than 2000*l.* sterling, except in any case wherein the influence is greater in proportion than the property, and may be deemed equal to the influence ordinarily accompanying the above amount; also, let the blank column for supposed influence be filled up with the initials "Li" for little, — "Mi" for middling, — "Gr" for great, —

* The Rev. Samuel Marsden, for whom Mr. Wilberforce subsequently obtained a chaplaincy in New South Wales.

and "V. Gr." for very great. The column for observations should contain remarks concerning the party's connections, &c... *e. g.* whether he likes the leg or wing of a fowl best, that when one dines with him one may win his heart by helping him, and not be taken in by his "just which you please, sir." Be so good as urge your friends to diligence, and, if possible, do not let them be informed that *I* have desired them to be set to work, but let an amiable confusion attend the business, like that of the institution of the Proclamation Society *; in short, let them find themselves at work without knowing how it happened. Thus far my friend Gisborne's hand has moved at my command. I now leave it free to its own spontaneous motions.

W. WILBERFORCE.

Now, Sir, you have professional ability enough to be aware that a man's hand is as susceptible of fatigue as his head; and though I do not mean to allege that mine are absolutely in that predicament, yet when you are apprised that I have scribbled four letters just now for Wilberforce, you will be ready to admit that my understanding may be somewhat muzzy, and my fingers somewhat cramped. I shall therefore release you, after thanking you for the favour of your letter, and assuring you of the good wishes of, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

T. GISBORNE.

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 135.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THOMAS BABINGTON, ESQ.

London, May 7th, 1791.

My dear Babington,

Your letter of the 2d instant had prepared me for that of this morning, and I can scarce condole with you on the event it communicates. The idea of being separated for life from a beloved parent, and all the innumerable circumstances of endearment that term carries with it in your case, must deeply affect your sensibility; but even your sorrow, like that of St. Paul, does not exclude rejoicing; and to me, who am not on the spot, the scene presents a face of unclouded joy and even triumph. Oh! my dear friend, may you and I be equally ready when it shall please God to call us hence; and may we meet our blessed Saviour as a friend, and not as an enemy and an avenger. Meanwhile, may we be enabled to lay aside every weight, and the sin which does most easily beset us, *looking unto Jesus!*

What a superiority is there in Christian principles over those of men of the world, even in the view of temporal comfort and of social happiness. This sentiment is strongly impressed on me by the shameful spectacle of last night; more disgraceful almost, and (so are we constituted) more affecting, than the rejection of my motion.* It happened that the chapter, which in a course of going through the prophet Isaiah met my eyes this morning, was the eleventh: turn to it, and contrast the blessed effects of the establishment of the Messiah's

* For the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

kingdom, the spirit of love and concord that it will diffuse, mentioned in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, with a long tried and close worldly connection * of five and twenty years, trampled to pieces in the conflict of a single night. I really scarce recollect being so much hurt at any thing, and I have been lamenting ever since that I did not myself interfere, though I am told it was better for me to be silent. Adieu, my dear friend; think of me — pray for me — I greatly need your prayers. With kind remembrances,

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE REV. DR. COOKSON.

London, May 9th, 1791.

My dear Cookson,

If I could have satisfied myself with one part of your alternative, you would have received an immediate answer to your letter; but it seemed monstrous to write to you by any other than my own hand, and my eyes being indifferent, and my epistolary debts many, I am rather commendable for taking up my pen now, than culpable in not having done it before. I thank God I am pretty well, though my having in some degree shifted my load off my own shoulders on those of the House of

* Between Burke and Fox.

Commons, hardly makes me feel a whit lighter. I still have a wallet full: a man can carry no more than he can, and this physical necessity is commonly the determiner of the quantum of my burthen; but then into this burthen I reckon great dinners and other such *relaxing* and recreating operations, as are to me more of labour in their effects, than even business itself.

In the midst of my bustle Sunday interposes itself, and is a real relief. I extremely wish you could hear Mr. Scott long enough to lose the sense of his ungainly manner: never did any one speak so home to my heart, or make such an impression on my memory; and I am not singular in these particulars, for Burgh, who is once more my inmate, entirely sympathises with me. Oh! my dear friend, how vain and trifling do all the pursuits of ambition appear to me, when I place them in comparison with that crown of glory which fadeth not away, and even with the comfortable quietness of a conscience void of offence. May God enable us to taste more of this peace which passeth all understanding, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit. It is really sickening to me to return to the world after having for a while withdrawn from it, and to see all its vices and its follies: but I find it difficult, I ought rather to say impossible, to prevent my contracting some of its ways of thinking and judging. Pray for me, my dear friend, pray for me, that I may not only be "fruitful in every good work," but "increasing also in the knowledge of God;" .. at that great day I may discover the beneficial effects of these intercessions at the throne of grace; and the service is one we busy men have a

peculiar right to require of you retired ones. Like Moses on the mountain, you may strengthen the hands of us who are fighting on the plain, and thus forward, and, in the end, partake of the victory.

I was called over the way when I had written thus far; and have now barely time to fold my paper. Adieu — adieu!

Best remembrances to Mrs. C. and Co. and believe me ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

GEORGE ROSE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Old Palace Yard, June 25th, 1791.

My dear Wilberforce,

This morning has brought us a most extraordinary and entirely unexpected piece of news — the escape of the whole of the royal family of France who remained in Paris, the king, queen, children, monsieur and madame; they went off at two o'clock on Monday morning, and were not missed till eight; the dispatches are dated on Wednesday, and it was not even then known, to any thing like a certainty, what route they had taken; the only thing indeed, like a surmise, was that they had passed by Senlis.

The National Assembly has acted in a collected manner, and with prudence in their situation; they have given assurances to the foreign ministers of firmness,

continuance of friendship, &c. and have ordered the great seal (we shall be told like our phantom during the regency) to be put to all instruments which require the royal authority. The messenger says there was a report that the king was stopped at Ardres as he passed, but I trust that is not true: I should think he would rather have got to the Rhine as soon as he could, by Luxembourg or that way, where he would probably be more sure of protection: it seems to me impossible he should get through such a tract of country as he must pass through without being stopped, but still more impossible that he should attempt the measure without being almost sure of success. I am all impatience for the event, and so I am sure you must be.

Pray tell me whether we have any chance of seeing you in Hampshire, and when.

You have heard, of course, that our friend Smyth succeeded completely at Pontefract, and is returned.

I am, my dear Wilberforce,
most faithfully and truly yours,
GEORGE ROSE.

THOMAS THOMPSON, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Hull, July 18th, 1791.

Sir,

The inclosed letter is from Mr. Joseph Benson, a preacher among the Methodists at Birmingham. I know Mr. Benson well, and I know him to be a pious

man, a man of very considerable abilities and of real learning. The fact undoubtedly is, that at this moment many thousands of the Methodists in different parts of the three kingdoms, are deliberating whether they shall become Dissenters, or continue in connection with the Church of England. I wish most sincerely that by some means they may be prevented from separating from the church; and as I know you are acquainted with some of the bishops, you may probably think it worth while to mention the matter to them. I believe the Methodists (I mean those only, at the head of whom was the late Rev. J. Wesley) are far more numerous than any sect of dissenters in England, and should they dissent, the opposition to the church and the present civil government will be greatly strengthened. I hope the bishops may think it necessary to do something, although I doubt whether the plan Mr. Benson proposes can be adopted. The Dissenters lose no opportunity to spread their sentiments, both religious and civil, and labour in every possible way to increase their numbers; and I wish the bishops may be roused to counteract them, and to see the danger which threatens the establishment.

I proposed to the Methodists here, which was unanimously agreed to, to print and send to all the Methodist societies in the nation, a letter declaring our determination to abide in connection with the Church of England, and recommending it to all the Methodists to do the same, and I hope it may have done good. But still there is some weight in what is alleged in answer to our letter . . "At Hull, your ministers in the church

are men of exemplary piety, but we have none such in our town or neighbourhood."

In the present portentous times, every good man will pray for peace, and be desirous of opposing, as he is able, the violent measures of dissatisfied and turbulent minds. I have the honour to remain, most sincerely, Sir,

Your much obliged
and most obedient humble servant,
THOMAS THOMPSON.

WILLIAM HEY, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

1791.

My dear Sir,

The quotation which I sent you, respecting the authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was taken from the first epistle of Clement, which I suppose is one of the most authentic and valuable remains of antiquity. You are aware that chapter and verse could not then be quoted from the Bible, and that quotations by the ancients were not always made in the very words of the Scriptures. The whole passage from Clement seems to be clearly a quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews, made in the usual way of quoting.

I had an opportunity the last summer of hearing Mr. G. preach in our parish church. His discourse was weighty and well delivered. I am inclined to think that the account, which I formerly sent you in a letter

from Mr. Richardson of York, rather described what Mr. G.'s preaching was, than what it is now. He seems to me to be a person whom you might recommend to a church in a populous place, even in London. The purchase of the new church in Manchester is attended with so many difficulties, that it is very doubtful whether he will be able to execute the scheme.

The Methodists are in a state of violent contention amongst themselves. A large part of the preachers do not like that state of degradation in which they have hitherto been taught to act. They wish to rise to the full office of ministers. Mr. Wesley was weak enough to ordain some. These now ordain others. Many of the people wish to keep in the old way of attempting to do good to all without forming a distinct sect. But this is a scheme not so well suited to the pride of human nature. Many are very jacobinical in their notions; they are chiefly those who revolt from the old plan. What is man!

I am, dear Sir,
your very affectionate friend,
WILLIAM HEY.

H. DUNCOMBE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

1791.

Dear Wilberforce,

I thank you for your cheese and your Greek, though I confess the former is more to my palate. You make me a pretty compliment in saying you should not be

so much off your guard if you were writing to Sheridan; as if a man who had been, when a boy, a year and a half head of Westminster, could be ignorant of Greek. You will say, perhaps, that it is some impeachment of my knowledge, that I have not looked into a Greek book these five and twenty years. However, to punish you, and to show my skill, I shall only observe, that when you write to a person so well conversant in the language, you should accent it.

I am now at my shooting place, where I should have more diversion if I could see better, and the game were more plentiful.

I cannot yet give you much account of the music or the races, only of the first, that the undertakers were not losers, and the town full; of the latter, the wonder was to see that Mr. Fox was there and the steward * absent. Certainly that latter circumstance was rather extraordinary.

Possibly your man from Markington may have been at Copgrove since I left it; I will endeavour not to offend his consequentiality.

Have you ever looked into a pamphlet, styled, "The Principles of Taxation considered?" If he is right, Mr. Pitt is not so, in deserting his plan of raising money by lowering the taxes. I like the book, and should wish to know the opinion entertained of it by persons of more judgment than myself. Pray read it. I rejoice that Pitt has got over his difficulties, though I fear not quite without disgrace: many think he is grown

* *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 276.

much too busy in foreign politics, and neglects to avail himself of the situation of France, which gives him an opportunity to detach us more from those wretched continental connections.

Mason has been spending a few days with me, and is well.

I am yours most truly,

H. D.

REV. ISAAC MILNER TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.*

Hull, December 3d, 1791.

My dear Sir,

In my last letter to you, I mentioned that I intended to write to Mr. Pitt, and to send a copy of the letter to the Bishop of Lincoln. It was with great reluctance that I brought myself to the step. I put it off from time to time, and it is now a very little time since I sent the account of my situation, which however at last was very full and explicit, and contained a complete history of my affairs, in three sheets. The Bishop of Lincoln answered me immediately, and espoused my cause with such a glow of friendship, as is never to be forgotten. In short, he said "he should never rest till he saw me settled in a comfortable income." Mr. P—— visited him lately at Buckden, and yesterday I received a most handsome and substantial letter from him, informing me

* Docketted by Mr. Wilberforce. Milner Deanery. Brother's illness. Picture of his mind.

that he had recommended me to His Majesty for the Deanery of Carlisle now vacant. I know neither the value of it, nor the requisite residence. I hope this last is not great. I am afraid journeys and ceremonies will be necessary by-and-by; and how I shall get through I know not, for at present I am not able to stir out of doors, much less to travel at this season of the year; and I fear a doctor's degree will be needful — at least proper. I have requested Mr. P—— to make all proper excuses for me he can. My health has suffered very severely by the bitterest affliction I ever experienced in my life. My brother was seized a fortnight ago with a fever, pleurisy, and spitting of blood; all this, added to his naturally asthmatical state, put his life for some days in the most imminent danger: I consider his situation still as critical, though the disease ceases to be called acute. I hope God will be gracious, and permit his continuance a little longer with us; but I verily believe his lungs are so much impaired, that he will never be equal to do business again. The fact is, he is worn out in labouring in the best of causes: he never could be induced to spend a moment idle: I never saw his equal in that respect, and I have long wished to see him relieved from a load of business, particularly the school teaching (you may remember I mentioned this to you, as well as my fears concerning him many years ago), and I have wished for it with a much greater earnestness than ever I did any thing for myself. My fear now is, that preaching at High Church * will also be too much for him: but it is

* The Rev. Joseph Milner was lecturer at Trinity Church, commonly called High Church, Hull.

time enough to consider this if he recovers; at present he is confined to his chamber, and likely to continue there.

You know the terms my brother and I have lived on from infancy; you must also be aware of the great comfort he has been to me by my bedside, as an affectionate friend and faithful adviser, during my long illness. Judge, my dear friend, what I must have felt on the prospect of seeing him snatched away. My aged mother is so afflicted, as never to rest for the last two years for half an hour. There is a steady niece and a graceless nephew; my dear brother the support and comfort of the family. In short, I have neither eaten nor slept, and without the positive interference of God's all supporting hand, I must inevitably have sunk if the prospect had still darkened. I never felt thus on my own account. I applied to the throne of grace with all the steadiness and fervour I could muster, but I told my brother I saw plainly I had not learned to submit to the Divine will. "The thing is," said he, when at worst, "Isaac, you don't make God your *summum bonum*."

Oh, my dear friend, the *views* of religion, concerning which you and I have so often conversed, are the only ones that *can help in time of need.* May God of His infinite mercy grant that you and I may truly and practically become acquainted with them. We are for ever substituting something else in the room of them. How necessary is the rod of correction! It leads to self-examination. I am very poorly and feeble, and must leave off. When do you go to London? You may perhaps be of some use to me, in instructing me to get through

these ceremonies, in getting me excused from some of them, or in palliating matters.

I remember you always affectionately,

J. M.

December 5th, Monday Morning.

My brother not quite so well this morning, but I hope not essentially worse.

I have this morning received a letter from the Bishop of Lincoln which rather distresses and flutters me: he says I ought to appear at the levee and drawing-room, which he believes is next Thursday se'nnight; now my fever is so very considerable, being increased by the causes mentioned in this letter, and the sharpness of the weather, that I cannot stir even out of doors without the utmost hazard. I have written to the Bishop of Lincoln to this effect, and I hope he will get me out of the embarrassment. Whenever it is that I come, unless you are in town to help me and to comfort me at your own house, I don't know how I shall ever get through such matters in this infirm state, particularly as I must acknowledge a natural awkwardness.

SAMUEL HOARE, ESQ.* TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Bath, February 20th, 1792.

My dear Friend,

I was fully aware that the insurrection of St. Domingo would create some alarm amongst our friends, and

* Treasurer of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

I am pleased to learn that every prudent measure will be adopted to obviate its effects; but I find another circumstance has rendered some of our best friends rather lukewarm, and especially those whom I am most earnest to bring forward, — I mean members of the Church of England. They have adopted an idea, which I hope has no foundation, that the Dissenters wish for a revolution; and that the Abolition of the Slave Trade is somewhat connected with it. What has added to this apprehension is some inquiries of Mr. Clarkson's, whether there are many friends to the French Revolution, in letters which he addresses to different places. If I knew where he was, I would write to him on the subject; a moment's reflection must convince him that there is too much reason to fear that what may be only meant as his own private sentiments, will be construed into an opinion of our committee. I hope thou wilt lose no time in giving him a hint upon this subject, or our cause will be essentially injured.

Ever thine,

SAMUEL HOARE.

THE REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Olney, July 9th, 1792.

My dearest Sir,

A letter from you should not have remained three or four days unanswered, could I have well helped it. But in the place where I lived so long, and where I can

stay but a little while, almost every minute is engrossed. I now thank you for it. The thought of your being upon the point of calling here, made my mouth water. I need not say it would have given both me and Mr. Bean very great pleasure; however, I have sufficiently introduced you by your letter to Mr. Cowper, and he commissions me to say, that whenever it may suit you to call on him, he shall be extremely glad to see you, and hopes you will consider him as having long known you by character, and as one who greatly respects you. At present he is in good health: the cloud still hangs upon his mind, but I trust he is approximating to his former light and comfort, though by slow degrees. He is evidently better than when I saw him last in 1788. His old friend and companion, Mrs. Unwin, was lately affected by another paralytic stroke: she is again getting better, but cannot walk without leading, nor be easily understood when she speaks. Should he outlive her, I should dread the consequence; but that I know (from my own experience) the Lord is all sufficient, and can support under the sharpest trials.

Glad should I be were I able to point out to you a proper person for New South Wales. The inquiry has been long and constantly upon my mind, but hitherto in vain: —

"Dwells then in England charity so dear?"

The zeal and self-denial necessary for this undertaking must be of a higher cast than ordinary, — must come from above; especially now the difficulties of Johnson's situation are generally known. But the Lord who has

given Johnson the missionary spirit, can stir up the hearts of others to succeed him.

Though I love Olney, I shall not be sorry to leave it. My feelings are excited here: almost every house I enter, and every person I see, reminds me of past times, and strengthens the remembrance of what I once had, and of what I have outlived. I carry this impression with me every where; but here local circumstances add to my sensibility; yet, blessed be the Lord, I am not uncomfortable; I have some feeling of the value of my many remaining mercies, and I can still relish them. I am satisfied that the Lord has done all things well.— *Sed hæret lateri arundo.*

I am learning to write short letters, but if my leisure was equal to my inclination, I should seldom give you a proof of my proficiency.

The good Lord guide, guard, and bless you, and make you a blessing more and more to the church and the nation. Amen.

I am, my dear Sir,

yours indeed,

JOHN NEWTON.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THOMAS BABINGTON, ESQ.

Bath, August 10th, 1792.

My dear Babington,

My friends are the only despots to whom I submit, and you command me to inform you immediately what

people think of the Polish subscription. What people think I only know from the papers; I rather doubt of the wisdom of the measure; but it would require a sheet full to let you into the state of my mind on this head, so I must defer it, my eyes being indifferent; I will dismiss it, therefore, adding that the subscription having been resolved on, I thought it right to countenance it, and have put down my name for 100*l.*

I will by no means forget Macaulay *; I think highly of his understanding; he appears to have a manly collected mind. In the utmost haste, my dear Babington,

I am ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

Near Bath, August 10. 1792.

My dear Madam,

I don't know any body to whom I can so properly apply myself as to yourself for information respecting the widow of Mr. Charles Wesley; and to you I may disclose that the object of this inquiry is to ascertain whether her circumstances, character, &c. render her a proper subject for pecuniary relief. Unless she is something very bad indeed, the widow of Charles Wesley ought, if health, not luxury, required it, to feed on ortolans; nay, I would not confine her to one dish, but, in spite of S——'s remonstrances, let her have a haunch

* Zachary Macaulay, Esq.

of venison daily into the bargain. Be kind enough not to make the matter more public than is quite unavoidable.

I have been half designing, every day since I have been here, to take up my pen, by way of shaking hands across the mountains. I don't know whether it will be in my power to avail myself of your kind invitation to Cowslip Green; but, without an untruth, if I can, it will give me real pleasure. Either in this letter, or, if there should not be a stamp in the house, by to-morrow's post, I shall transmit you a draft for 14*l.* on account of my dear sister. Still, according to Falstaff's arithmetic, and here he beats Cocker, she and I both owe you a million.

The Grants are coming here for a short time, and, I trust, will be my guests. I hope all goes on well with you, both in the house and out of it. May God prosper all your labours, and return them seven-fold into your own bosom. Did you ever read, or do you possess, Mr. Howe's "Treatise on Delighting in God?" If not, I will endeavour to get it and send it you: it is a most valuable present. Adieu, my dear Madam.

I am always affectionately
and faithfully yours,
W. WILBERFORCE.

Excuse haste: I write at full gallop, to make a little eyesight go as far as possible. Best remembrances to Miss P.; and the rest of your household are so evidently always to be understood that it seems an act of superfluity to express them. My sister is pretty well.

DR. CURRIE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Liverpool, April 23d, 1793.

Dear Sir,

If in the long letter which I wrote to you two days ago, there appears a good deal of unguarded warmth, the following circumstance will explain, though perhaps not justify, it.

I was sitting in my study on the evening of Saturday reflecting on public affairs, when a young man called to drink coffee with me, a manufacturer of Stockport, near Manchester. After giving a picture of the general distress there, he informed me of his own situation in particular, and of the business which brought him to Liverpool.

He said that the house of which he is a partner employed about 15,000 hands, all of whom were now idle, or, as the phrase is, off work. That, previous to their being discharged, he and his partner had struggled on from one week to another, in hopes that the times would mend, and a demand, more or less, come for their goods. That, in this hope, they had gone on for the last three weeks, and not having a sufficient quantity of money to pay the people their full weekly wages, they had prevailed on them to accept about a third of the sum, as this, with economy, might suffice for subsistence. In procuring the money for this purpose, he told me that they had been reduced to extraordinary difficulties. Formerly they sold their goods

in large quantity, but now they determined to supply the retailers themselves with a single piece, or even less; and, provided they paid them in specie, at almost any price. Accordingly, having goods in their warehouse that suited the home market, they fitted up a light cart and sent a young man with it, full of goods, to supply the retailers in every part of the country, and to bring home the specie every Saturday, whatever might be the loss. The expedient succeeded for about three weeks, but had now failed, and he was come to Liverpool to try if, by any possible means, he could raise a few hundred guineas, to get over another week and keep his people alive. He told me that he and his partner had been constantly among them, and by entering into all their distresses, had prevailed on them to be extremely patient and reasonable. At their last meeting they had agreed to wait this young gentleman's return from Liverpool, and what money he was able to raise, they had consented should be laid out in oatmeal, which being boiled up with water, potatoes, and some of the coarser pieces of beef, should be shared out in fair proportion among them; and thus, in the cheapest manner, provide for their subsistence. As the house had many thousands owing them in Liverpool, though he knew there was no hope of any considerable debts being paid, he had no fear of not being able to procure the sum immediately wanted. He had been using every effort for two days, and had actually threatened to arrest two of our principal merchants on the exchange, but he had not been able to raise a single guinea. How he was to

face the poor people he knew not; each of whom had from four to six weeks' wages due. But he could appeal to Heaven for the anxious exertions which he had made to relieve distresses, which he could neither foresee nor prevent. As I looked at this young man, I perceived that his countenance seemed actually withered with care and sorrow. He is not a common character; he was the apprentice of Messrs. Bolton and Watt, and has an extraordinary degree of the most useful knowledge of every kind. He is modest, virtuous, and prudent; of astonishing application, and, in a word, one of the first young men I ever knew. These qualities recommended him to the notice of the manufacturers, among whom he exercised his profession of a mechanic and engineer. He had offers of partnership from the first houses there, and was actually taken into the house of Mr. Oldknow of Stockport, about a year ago; at that time, perhaps, the first establishment in Lancashire. Mr. Oldknow you must have heard of, as the original fabricator of muslin in this country, and a man of first-rate character. He has laid out a property of 50,000*l.* on building and machinery alone. His partner (the young gentleman I spoke of) is named Ewart, the younger brother of Mr. Ewart, the late envoy at Berlin.

It is men such as these that are reduced to such extremities.

Mr. Ewart told me that a deputation was gone up to Mr. Pitt, to represent the danger and distress of the country; but that such was the excessive bigotry of the church and king party now triumphant, and such the

manner in which they had pledged themselves by addresses, that they were not instructed to make any remonstrances on the subject of the war.

Deeply impressed with these representations, I took up my pen the moment he left me, and sitting down to write at eleven at night, I poured out my thoughts in the letter you have, I presume, received; from which I did not rise till day-break. I had no time to copy or correct it, and therefore I trust in your extraordinary candour to overlook what may have appeared too vehement, and to excuse what may have seemed incorrect.

Since this time I have been thinking that it is my duty to appeal to the public, and to endeavour to point out to them the source of all their calamities. In doing this, it will be not less my interest than my inclination to continue unknown; and as it will be impossible for you not to discover me, I must rely for concealment on your honour. It is my intention to address myself in a letter to Mr. Pitt, and to go over more coolly a great part of the ground touched on in my letter to you, as well as a good deal additional.

In doing this I shall have difficulties to encounter, from the peculiar delicacy of many of the topics I shall have to discuss, and from the lamentable star-chamber oppression, produced by the folly and fanatic bigotry of the times. I must, by all means, endeavour to avoid the crown of martyrdom; but boldly I must speak, or continue silent.

I shall do nothing final in this project till I see how you receive my letter. I need not tell you with how

much true respect and affectionate regard I consider your character, or what influence any hint of yours would have on me.

I am, in great haste,

Your faithful servant.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Walmer Castle, October 3d, 1793.

My dear Muncaster,

I really was not conscious of having suffered you to remain so long without hearing from me; I am sorry your anxious solicitude had been awakened by my silence. I thank God I have been as well as usual, saving my eyes, to which windy weather is always unfavourable; but I have been shifting my quarters very frequently, which, though it is what I am pretty well used to, is a system to which custom by no means reconciles me. I arrived here about two hours ago, having been much pressed by Pitt to take possession of my quarters in his new habitation, and I never knew him better. The place is exactly suited to his taste — open downs for riding, high cliffs in the neighbourhood, and the castle itself all but in the sea. The house quite good enough for the purpose, and purely ventilated by every wind that blows. There are walls which rival, and, I think, surpass in thickness, your famous one at Muncaster. 'Tis not known for a certainty whether the new

respecting Dumourier are to be depended on. The revenue flourishes amazingly: the season has been unhealthy every where, and the rains almost incessant.

Shore, the newly-appointed Governor-general, is a most able, honourable man; after having been twenty years in India, and for three or four of them in the Supreme Council, he returned with a fortune of about 25,000*l.*, and was with difficulty compelled to accept the splendid and lucrative post of Governor-general, which government so creditably to themselves absolutely forced on him.* He was living in retirement, not even keeping a carriage, in Somersetshire, with a sweet wife and two children. I dined with him since at Pitt's in company with Dundas, and he was there the same simple dignified man he had been in his country privacy. Adieu, adieu, my dear Muncaster; I could not have forgiven myself for delaying to take up my pen, though I do it in the utmost hurry. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO HIS SISTER.

Battersea Rise, October 18th, 1793.

My dear Sister,

My judgment is decidedly and strongly in favour of your taking an early dinner on Sunday, and going to

* Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 229.

church in the afternoon; I cannot think my mother will have any objection, but rather conceive she will be glad to be of your party. I don't say it lightly, I believe the contempt into which the sabbath has fallen, bids fair to accelerate the ruin both of church and state more than any other single circumstance whatever; and it is the bounden duty of every friend to our civil happiness no less than to our religious interests, to hold up its authority. Now, what a scandalous breach of it is the formally and systematically sitting down to dinner at the hour when public worship commences: what a host of servants, &c. are kept unavoidably away. Remember that all absenting from church begins, and is generally defended by saying, that one may read the service at home. There is no duty more solemnly and positively, and scarce any more frequently enjoined on us than that of *publicly honouring the name and service of God.* But I will not enter into a recital of my premises, which I have not leisure or eyesight to put down; my conclusion is clear, and that I hope will satisfy you. Only let me guard you against thinking there will be any great singularity in this: it is one of those things wherein the duty is so obvious and binding, that in doing it there can be little exertion; in leaving it undone, great blame.

I must lay down my pen, but I will say a word or two to that part of your letter wherein you express a doubt whether *we* are not too strict — to which, for myself, I say most sincerely, not half strict enough, at least in practice. But the matter may be brought to one short issue, so far as the Buxton and Battersea Rise systems are in question. Do the Buxtonians differ from

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us — I hate to speak of myself or of others; I will put the sentiment in another shape. If I see people earnestly pursuing their future happiness, though I may think by a wrong road, they seem to me to deserve to be distinguished widely from those who are evidently giving themselves no concern about the matter. If an eternity of happiness or misery be dependent on the manner of spending this life, indifference is insanity. They who argue for a more relaxed system will hardly say they expect to be happier hereafter than if they were more strict; all at least I have heard from them in general is, that they think they are strict enough to insure their safety. We do not act so in matters of temporal interest: a man would be thought a fool who, having the whole of Europe wherein to choose his residence, should plant himself within such a distance from a pest-house as he and some other unthinking people held sufficient for his safety, though the wiser and better of his friends told him he was in hourly danger of infection. I will not refer you to Doddridge, and Witherspoon, and Walker, but to Barrow, and Tillotson, and Taylor. St. Paul surely would have been thought far advanced on the christian road, yet he says, "forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press towards the mark," &c. May it please God, my dear sister, for Christ's sake, to make you abound more and more in every good work. May your heart be comforted, your views cleared, your love strengthened, your faith confirmed. *Here* indeed, I believe (for I have the declaration from the best of men) we must ever groan, being burthened. Alas! what cause have I

for groaning: but let us wait on God with continual prayers for the influence of His blessed Spirit, to render us daily fitter for a better world, where all sin, as well as sorrow, shall cease for ever.

Give my kindest remembrances to my dear mother. Venn speaks very affectionately of you. By the way I will inclose a letter I have just received from him: it contains nothing, but is as good as a morning call: return it. In extreme haste, your ever affectionate,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Battersea Rise, July 9th, 1794.

My dear Muncaster,

Though my neighbour Lord A.'s *knocker is not tied up*, yet I know from certain information the truth of what the newspapers contain of the new admission into the cabinet; from such an event various conclusions are to be drawn, and on the whole they leave me in doubt, whether to regret or rejoice in it. Surely it would have been more creditable for the parties themselves to have continued to support as independent men; but if they did not like this, I don't well see how Pitt could wisely refuse to let them (I will not say take them) in; though hardly, I confess, necessary in such full force. Lord Mansfield (the privy seal) might surely have been

spared, and the Duke of Portland have had the office instead of that of secretary of state. . . . By a very proper division of two unconnected lines, which formed a whole too great for one man, Dundas is still to retain that part of the business which respects the war and forms the bond of union with the other great officers of admiralty, treasury, &c. . . . Fitzwilliam, president of council — very well; Windham, secretary at war and in the cabinet — no objection; on the whole, however, I will frankly confess to you that, as a question of feeling, this is not very pleasant to me.

I wish all their united wisdom may, under the Divine blessing, keep us in some tolerable condition; but I will say nothing of politics. I could not help just taking up my pen for two moments. After all I can smile at the bustle of this vain world, and pity the poor things who so overrate the value of its baubles as to take up with them as if they were substantial and unfading riches. But I would look to a better and a more enduring possession. Adieu, my dear friend. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster.

I am, ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Wimbledon, August 15th, 1794.

My dear Wilberforce,

I received your letter of the 2d, but was so occupied I could not then answer it. You know that Botany Bay is no longer in my department, but I feel as strongly as you can do the importance of due instruction to the natives and settlers of those islands, so as to be deeply interested about it, and I shall take a very early opportunity of speaking much to John King on the subject.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Hotwells, Bristol, September 20th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

After a very stormy and disastrous passage I have at last safely landed again in this happy country, and have not only escaped the dangers we were exposed to on the sea, but regained a tolerable share of health during the voyage. I have also the happiness to find the dear relations I have in this place all well. Few mortals are at this moment more happy, or have more cause for gratitude to that good Providence by which all

human affairs are governed. I cannot resist the inclination to communicate this to you, because I believe it will give pleasure to your benevolent feelings; besides, I wish to learn where you at present are to be found, that I may know where to send a turtle, of which I beg your acceptance. I have two or three, which I hope to land in good order on Monday, and the best is designed for you; for I know nobody more worthy of the good things of the West Indies, nor one who, as matters stand, has a worse chance of often receiving them.

My brother tells me you sent to him for a direction to me, and he supposes wrote to me under a cover he sent by the 2d of June or 1st of July packet. The former had arrived before I left St. Kitts, and brought me no such letter; but if it arrived in my absence, I have no doubt if will be sent me unopened. I hope to hear you are well; I need not add "and otherwise happy," for nothing but sickness, which wonderfully and irresistibly affects the mind itself, can deprive a mind like yours of its best enjoyments. I am, with the truest respect and esteem, dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

JAMES STEPHEN.

LORD STANHOPE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Chevening House, near Sevenoaks, Kent,
December 5th, 1794.

Dear Mr. Wilberforce,

The personal regard I have for you, and the motives which induce me to write you this letter, will make you, I am sure, excuse the liberty I take.

The day of the meeting of parliament draws nigh; the awful question of bloodshed and war, or of peace, will be agitated.

You, of course, must be to make up your mind on that momentous subject. *You* can do much; it is therefore the more essential that you should do right.

However much I approve your general conduct, and admire some sublime parts of it, I must tell you, with all the sincerity of a friend, that your conduct on the above-mentioned subject is not what I expected from you. The man who votes to draw the sword to kill a brother, ought well to reflect whether he is quite certain that he is right and fully justified in so doing. But when a man votes for war, for the destruction of hundreds of thousands, for the laying waste of countries, and for all the moral evils attending on war, he heaps indeed a dreadful responsibility on his head. For it is not to you, dear citizen, that I need observe that this life is no other than a journey; the being unavoidable is the necessary requisite in order to reconcile any war to a religious mind. You cannot say that it would not have been possible to have avoided the present one, nor that it is

not possible to put an end to it. That alone might decide the question.

But when you reflect on the situation of things, the events abroad, and those likely to happen, the change of the public mind at home, and the greater change that will probably take place as taxes and difficulties increase, you would do well to ask yourself this question, namely, "Whether by voting to continue the war, you may not finally bring this country into such a situation that peace may not be possible to be obtained." Possibly you may never have put to yourself that question.

But it is not sufficient for a man of your description not to vote for the projected carnage, but as an individual who has attracted the attention of the public, and as the representative of our largest county, it is your duty, both in parliament and in private, to do every thing in your power to prevent it. Perhaps in private you may have attempted it already; if so, and you have failed, it is the more incumbent on you to take your part decidedly in the House of Commons against a system, the obvious (and perhaps near) end of which is inextricable ruin.

Do you not remember when the House of Lords was told, and I believe the House of Commons also, that the French had but few arms, no clothes, no stock of ammunition, no real enthusiasm, no discipline in their armies, not provisions enough to prevent their starving, no means of cultivating their lands, no money, no credit, no resources; and when I stated, in every one of these respects, directly the reverse? I mention not this

to recall to your recollection the odious and infamous reflections cast out against me for having dared to do my duty (though often single), and to speak the truth; but I do it to show you, from what is now notorious, that those who ought to have been well and officially informed, had no good information, or did not think proper to lay it before parliament. Suffer not therefore your honourable mind to be misled by pretended official information. I have no doubt but that the resources of the French (if properly brought forth) are greater at this moment than when I stated them in the House to be greater than those of all their enemies combined. I have seen little, except ignorance and folly, on that subject.

On the contrary, this country, Great Britain, is vulnerable in so many ways, that the picture is horrid. By letter I will say nothing upon that subject. One instance I will however state, because it is information you cannot, as yet, receive from any other quarter; though in two or three months from the date of this letter the fact will be fully established, and you may then hear it from others. The thing I allude to is of peculiar importance.

The fact is this. I know (and in a few weeks shall prove), that ships of any size, and, for certain reasons the larger the better, may be navigated in any narrow or other sea, without sails (though occasionally with), but so as to go without wind, and even directly against both wind and waves.

The consequences I draw are as follows: —

First, that all the principal reasons against the French

having the ports of Ostend, &c. cease; inasmuch as a French fleet, composed of ships of the above-mentioned description, would come out at all times from Cherbourg, Dunkirk, &c. as well as from Ostend, &c. and appear in the same seas. The water, even at Dunkirk, will be amply deep enough for the purpose of having them there. The French having Ostend ought not therefore . . under this new revolution in naval affairs, for it will be complete revolution . . to be a bar to peace. Under the old nautical system, naval men might have reasoned differently upon that subject.

But the most important consequence which I draw from the stupendous fact mentioned at the top of this page is this, namely, that it will shortly, and very shortly, render all the existing navies of the world (I mean military navies) no better than lumber. For what can ships do that are dependent upon wind and weather, against fleets wholly independent of either.

Therefore, the boasted superiority of the English navy is no more! We must have a new one.

The French and other nations will, for the same reason, have their new ones.

Now, do you seriously mean, or can you as an honest man (which you are), reconcile it to your conscience to place the very existence of your native land on this miserable foundation; namely, on the circumstance of which of the European nations can build new ships fastest. Recollect, I pray you, that the French, according to Dr. Price's calculations, independent of their new acquisitions, were upwards of thirty millions, and that England and Wales together do not contain five.

Recollect, also, that they can bring, not only all ship-wrights, but all house carpenters, smiths, &c. into requisition; and this, from their unparalleled enthusiasm in the cause in which they feel themselves engaged, will be cheerfully submitted to. This never has been done in England, and I am sure, in the present state of men's minds in that useful class, it cannot now be done.

Having now received the above information, what answer, nay what excuse, can you make to your constituents, and to your country, should you not oppose the war; and, above all, what excuse can you make to that Being, infinitely high, who is the Creator of us all.

Reason, temper, foresight, and justice, can alone save us.

I send you inclosed a literal translation of the 118th and 119th Articles of the French Constitution, in case you should not have seen it, as it completely refutes the nonsense we daily hear about their supposed intended interference in our internal concerns. It is not a simple decree, nor a mere law, but a fundamental article of the last constitution.

I shall be ever happy to hear you are well, though I neither wish nor expect you to reply to this; I shall be glad merely to know it is received. I am quite sure at least you cannot answer my arguments. Possibly I may not have the pleasure of seeing you in the winter, as I shall be almost entirely at this place. Whilst I had a prospect of opening men's minds, I was anxious to attend the House. That time is past; events I believe either have or will open them shortly. Till

then I shall be more happy at a distance from the disgusting scene, from which I wish my duty would allow me to be wholly absent.

Dear Sir, believe me, with great regard and truth, and as an Englishman,

Your sincere and faithful fellow citizen,

STANHOPE.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

6. Coleman Street Buildings, Dec. 13th, 1794.

My dear Sir,

If I had more leisure for writing, and was sure that you had leisure and eyes for reading, I should perhaps be forced to apologise for troubling you too often. But while I am cautious of breaking in upon your time, and have more engagements of my own than I can properly attend to, I must rather intreat you not to judge of my respect and affection by the infrequency of my letters. The circumstances under which you were first pleased to make yourself known to me, and the confidence with which you then favoured me, have given you a peculiar place in my heart, independent of the regard I owe to your general character and situation. Though I usually feel something of a reserve with gentlemen in a public and superior line of life, who oblige me with their notice, I think there is hardly a person with whom I could more readily converse or correspond in a *tête à*

tête way, or to whom I could more freely open my mind, than to you, were I to see you often and when you had a vacant hour.

I believe my last letter was dated in August, from Cowslip Green; I have just seen you since, but had no opportunity of expatiating on my delightful visit there. I seemed like the Queen of Sheba at Solomon's court; what I saw and found exceeded all that I had heard, and all that I imagined. The Lord gave me much to be thankful for in many places. But as an interview with Miss More was the grand and leading object of my western tour, so the time I spent there still affords me the most pleasure and instruction upon a review.

I have been now more than three months in my old track — not I would hope idle, nor I would hope unuseful; but I have reason to confess, I am an unprofitable servant, especially when I compare myself with some others, and think of their sacrifices and their exertions. And my little will soon be less. The shadows of the evening are advancing upon me. The night cometh when no man can work. The good Lord help me to fill up the uncertain remnant of my time, as becomes my profession and my obligations. May He preserve my declining age from errors and stains, and keep me in a waiting posture, with my loins girded up and my lamp burning; that whenever, or however, the summons may come, I may be found ready. To these petitions I doubt not but you will kindly set your Amen.

Next Thursday will be the anniversary of the day, which terminated my late great trial. Then the desire of my eyes, my dearest earthly comfort, was removed;

and when she died, I am willing to hope the world died with her. I ought, like the apostle, to have been crucified to the world by the cross of Christ; but, alas! it was very imperfectly the case.

I remember, when I owed it to your kindness that Mr. Pitt came out of the room to introduce me to the Privy Council *, I thought that, supposing he had taken the occasion to ask what he could do for me, I was totally unprovided with an answer, unless I had thanked him, and said with the Shunamite, "I dwell amongst my own people." I wanted no one to speak for me, either to the king or to the archbishop. The Lord by placing me at St. Mary Woolnoth, had already raised me to the summit of my wishes, so that no human influence could raise me higher. But, then, my dear Mrs. Newton was living, and my regard for her tied me down too closely to this life and the concerns of it by a thousand invisible strings. These are now broken. Now I seem to feel myself a stranger and a pilgrim indeed; and to see that, excepting a subserviency to the will and glory of God, and the good of mankind for His sake, there is nothing here for which I could wish to live another day. I cannot easily express how trivial all that the world calls most important, considered merely in a temporal view, appears to me. In reading Gulliver's Travels, I have sometimes smiled at the assumed consequence and weighty engagements of Hurgoes and Nardacs, who were but five or six inches high. But can the value of actions depend upon the size of

* Mr. Newton had given evidence on the subject of the slave trade. Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 170.

the agents? or does the insignificance of conduct, attributed to such diminutive creatures, cease where it is exhibited by those who are measured, not by inches but by feet? Perhaps superior beings look upon us, as we should do upon the Liliputians; only, I suppose, their disdain may be mingled with compassion. For they consider us as immortals, and may feel both wonder and concern, when they see how trifling and thoughtless we are upon the brink of eternity. I suppose a maniac, who calls himself a king, weaves his straw into a crown, and insists upon it that his chains are made of gold; and the insignia of royalty, cannot be so pitiable an object to us, as a *Potemkin* is to angels.

The motto of Drury Lane play-house holds forth a lesson, which I fear is seldom duly attended to by those who frequent it,—*Totus mundus agit histrionem.* Human life is a drama, in which every man has a part, higher or lower, to perform. But the far greater number think it a reality, and are not aware how fast the plot is hastening to the catastrophe, and how soon the curtain will fall. Then the external distinctions, upon which some prided themselves as if properly their own, will cease, and all the actors will stand upon a level, and be judged according to their works. The question will not be, "What part we performed?" but, "How we performed it?" The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day! It will be an awful day to many who were admired and envied while upon earth. Alas! for the rich, the gay, the wise (as they are called), the busy, and the mighty, who strutted for a while in borrowed plumes, lived without God in the world, regard-

less of their Maker, and instead of employing their talents in His service, perverted them for the ruin of themselves and their connections, as far as their influence could reach. Alas! If Mr. Garrick had really thought himself to be the individual Richard or Macbeth whom he sometimes personated, and had acted in common life, and when off the stage, as he did while he was still upon it, he would have been justly accounted mad. Such madness is in all our hearts; I congratulate you, my dear Sir, not upon your situation in the world, but that, while you are yet in it, the Lord has called you out of it. Your situation would be rather an object of condolence, if I only considered yourself and your present comforts. I often think, what would Mr. Wilberforce give for that command of time and choice of company and opportunities, which I am favoured with, if it were consistent with the post the Lord has, in His providence, assigned him? But you are not your own, nor do you wish to live for yourself.

Though some time must and will be reserved for secret waiting upon God by those who feel their need of such supplies as only He can communicate, yet much time of retirement is not essentially necessary when His service calls to active life. Religion is not confined to devotional exercises, but rather consists in doing all we are called and qualified to do, with a single eye to His glory and will, from a grateful sense of His love and mercy to us. This is the alchemy which turns every thing into gold, and stamps a value upon common actions. May He guide you by His counsel, cheer you with His presence, and strengthen your hands, and grant you the best desire of your heart!

When you have leisure to favour me with a line, I shall be glad of your judgment respecting the associations rapidly forming to stop the consumption of West Indian produce. If you and your friends who have exerted yourselves so nobly for the abolition of the slave trade, and are likewise known friends to government, were to recommend such a measure, I should readily adopt it. At present, and especially as a minister, I do not enforce it; I think it premature, and rather beginning, as we say, at the wrong end. In these noisy times I would be cautious of taking any steps which might even remotely seem to imply dissatisfaction with government. I judge of your sentiments by those of Mr. Thornton and Sir Charles Middleton. But I wish, if you please, to have the sanction of your own name.

If Mr. Thornton and Mr. Grant should be with you when my letter comes, I beg to present my best respects to them. I have had, which seldom happens, a forenoon without interruption. Had it been otherwise, I should have put your patience to a shorter trial.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your obedient, and affectionate,

and obliged servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

JOHN JAY, ESQ. [American Ambassador] TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

January 28th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

Accept my thanks for your obliging letter of yesterday, and for the copies of the Sierra Leone Report which accompanied it.

I have read it with pleasure, and perceive that more important and interesting consequences may result from that settlement than I had apprehended. You must derive great satisfaction from being thus employed in works of humanity and beneficence — they who promote the happiness of others, advance their own.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN JAY.

ZACHARY MACAULAY TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

King's Arms Yard, November 21st, 1795.

Dear Sir,

I was last night at a debating society in Wych Street, Drury Lane, where the question proposed was, "Whether a king of England would not violate his coronation oath by giving sanction to a convention bill." Before the debate began, I amused myself with listening to the conversation passing around me. One between

two men and a woman, all decently dressed, was to the following effect:—

First Man. "I 'll tell you how I think, I think as how if the king passes this bill, he declares war on the people."

Woman. "Ay, and he violates the bill of rights."

Second Man. "Ay, that he does, and his coronation oath; he does not know his duty; he ought to go to school again, but I hope the people will teach him." "But I think," said the first man, "as how I can prove, as clear as the sun, that if he passes this bill, he declares war on the Supreme Being. Did not Mr. Erskine tell us as how the voice of the people was the voice of God?"

"True," said the second man, "Vox populi, vox Dei."

First Man. "They have used us like swine, and now we begin to grunt, they mean to hang us up like dogs; but we will grunt, and may be make them grunt too."

Woman. "Did you not see how Mr. Erskine told us we might resist? Ay, and so we will too."

First Man. "Now, there 's that monster, Wilberforce; what a fellow he is, and he pretends to be a good man too. Why, he 's for the bill. Hanging is too good for such a fellow. As for the others, they don't pretend to be good, and it is not so much in them to favour the bill; but he tells you he 's religious!"

Second Man. "I heard Mr. Jones declare in the Forum, as how he would meet the society at Copenhagen House, come what might. They could not, he said, take up every body."

First Man. "All Pitt wants is to hang Thelwall and Jones: they had better take care, for people will be got to swear more stoutly than before; and if they are taken up, I would not give a fig for their lives."

Second Man. "There again. Now I hate all spies and informers; they ought all to be swept away from the earth. Now there was that fellow that swore to the Pop-gun Plot in the playhouse; why he's bad enough to swear to any thing. He taught what he called a religious school in the city, but I suppose it was some such religion as Mr. Wilberforce's."

The chair being at length taken by a very shabby looking fellow, the question was read, and gentlemen were asked to give their opinions. A man, who looked like a methodist, spoke very confusedly in favour of the bills. He said some good things however, and concluded by saying, "that if these bills met, as he believed they did, the sentiments of a majority of the householders of this country, the king would violate his coronation oath in not sanctioning them." A man, whom I took to be a weaver, then spoke on the other side of the question. He did not at all discuss the provisions of the bills, or enter upon their merits; but he asserted unconditionally, that the king, in passing these bills, would violate the bill of rights, consequently his coronation oath, and of course that the people would be entirely loosed from their allegiance, and would be justifiable in taking arms to oppose their being enforced. Magistrates were necessarily blockheads, and of course improper persons to be entrusted with the powers this bill gave them.

He was replied to by the man who spoke first, who went over what he had said before. He was followed by a violent democrat, who asserted in round terms, that King George the Third, in passing these

bills, would be guilty of an act of the most atrocious perjury, and would therefore deserve the punishment of it; the people ought to rise to crush a faction which was bent on their slavery. Pitt was the head of this faction, and as for the King, he seemed to be little more than one of Pitt's adherents. If it were possible for him to imagine that Englishmen would not resist the enforcing the law which these bills introduced, he would pray and desire with his whole heart that they might be doomed to eternal chains. He used many similar expressions. The meeting was adjourned.

I remain, with respect, dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

Z. MACAULAY.

JEREMY BENTHAM, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's Square Place, March 8, 1796.

My dear Sir,

A thousand thanks for your kind remembrance; my business *, for any thing I have heard, lies on the same table on which it has lain these six weeks. The Solicitor-General, a perfect stranger, has in a recent letter spontaneously expressed his concern on the same subject. Mr. Dundas, by whom I was twice called upon "to take my arrangements," both times in the same terms, cannot but entertain similar feelings (and they should naturally be stronger in degree), which, indeed, he has more than once expressed to me. Since

* The Panopticon. Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, cap. xiii. vol. i. p. 171.

the contract, after having been settled with Mr. Pitt, through the medium of Mr. Long *in terminis*, was transmitted by an official letter to Mr. White, which I saw, "to be prepared for their Lordships' signature" (now upwards of six months ago), I have found myself obliged to advance above 1200*l.* on the business, in addition to the many thousands advanced before. I am warranted by deeds, as well as words, and looks that speak more than words, in adding Mr. Morton Pitt to the list of sympathisers. Surely the sentiments of such and so many friends cannot be altogether indifferent to Mr. Pitt.

The more I think of the system, which through your means is about to be set on foot in relation to the Poor Laws, the more I am delighted with it. But to one clause a sheet of objections have presented themselves, which I take the liberty of submitting to you. Possibly I may send another to Mr. Morton Pitt, who, you told me, is a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Ever your most obliged

JEREMY BENTHAM.

REV. RICHARD CECIL TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Little James Street, March 12, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I thank you very kindly for your remarks. I have often lamented that I could not find a friend who would tell me very plainly what he observed and felt

while sitting in the church where I minister. And (though it is an odd thing to say) I have actually thought that if I could find some poor man of a sound and informed mind, I would employ him to sit and hear me, and pay him an extra half-crown for every capital blunder he pointed out. As you are not poor, I do not send the half-crown with this letter; but as you have the sound and informed mind, pray afford me the help without the money.

I must indeed confess, that I have been told before now of my speaking too low, and sometimes think I could do more for my hearers in preaching two sermons in the day than in preaching three, but at any rate I will do my utmost to be heard. I have also spoken two or three times to my worthy assistant, Mr. P——, about what you mention, and was very glad to have your letter as fresh ground for speaking again.

With much gratitude for this and all other favours,
I remain, dear Sir,
Your obliged, humble servant,
RICHARD CECIL.

HERCULES ROSS, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Your own Parlour, Saturday noon, April 9, 1796.

Having had occasion to come as far as Doncaster to see some friends, I could not resist throwing myself into one of the coaches, two evenings ago, and coming this length. I argued that it was but 160 miles, and I should have the happiness of seeing my most esteemed

friend. Behold now I have reached his door, he is unwell and confined to his chamber. May the Almighty be pleased soon to restore him to health, and long to preserve his valuable life.

I think of returning this evening for Edinburgh; I left Mrs. Ross there. We are paying some visits previous to our embarking upon a long promised visit to our parent, Mr. Parish, at Hamburgh, who proposes sending a neutral ship for us to Rossie, about the beginning of June. Permit me to request that you will suffer one of your domestics to write a few lines, addressed to Drysdale's Hotel, Edinburgh, signifying how you are, a few days hence.

I had proceeded far in answering your last invaluable letter, but, alas! temper failed, and I relinquished the attempt; but Mrs. Ross will do it. Adieu, my dear friend,

I am most truly yours,

H. Ross.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO A FRIEND.

Palace Yard, April 25, 1796.

My dear ——,

If the news of my illness should have reached you, I am persuaded it will give you pleasure to receive from myself the assurance of my recovery. I am still, however, to consider myself only convalescent, and to abstain from whatever bears the semblance of business. Moderation in the use of my pen is of course enjoined; and having a

good deal of indispensable writing, you would not hear from me just now if it were not for some intelligence respecting your situation which I have very lately received, and which will not suffer me to delay for a moment communicating to you the result of my consideration. I must be short; but between us what need of preamble?

You are persuaded, I trust, of the friendly regard I entertain for you, which I flatter myself is not greater than what you feel for me. I am rich—you are poor. I am your nearest relation who is unencumbered. Now surely, under these circumstances, it cannot but be right for you to allow me annually to appropriate to your use as much as, added to your other resources, will set you at ease as to money matters; and I assure you, it would give me real pleasure to supply you with it. You ought not to feel any embarrassment on the occasion: you do little justice to my friendship for you, if you do not rate it far beyond any pecuniary help. If our circumstances were mutually changed, you, I am sure, would gladly contribute to my accommodation; and I can say with truth, that I should apply to you without reluctance, and receive your assistance without a blush. I will contrive to make my payments so as to keep the transaction secret, and they shall begin from the 25th of March last. I have been revolving a little where you could live most comfortably. Of that we may talk hereafter; but I own I am inclined to give the preference to ——, as I do not think the difference of expense ought to outweigh all other considerations. Now, my dear ——, may God bless and preserve you. I wish it were in my power as easily to give you tranquillity and com-

fort of mind, as to remove your pecuniary embarrassments. Be assured at all times of the pleasure it will afford me to promote in every way your happiness; and believe me, with every friendly wish, in great haste,

Affectionately and faithfully yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

RIGHT HON. W. PITT TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Pembroke Hall, Tuesday, 10 P.M. 1796.

My dear Wilberforce,

I am this moment returned hither, and do not lose a moment in re-despatching your messenger.* On receiving Mr. Bateman's letter from Hull, I had endeavoured to find a person who would go down in readiness to offer himself, in case the ground should not have been occupied in the interval. Such a person was found, and had nearly agreed to set out to-morrow; and Mr. Bateman will probably receive a letter from Long to that effect by the post, which leaves London to-day. I have now written by a messenger to countermand my friend, thinking it clearly better that Stanhope should have the full support of the friends of government. I beg you will explain to those who sent the application to me, that nothing can be more satisfactory to me than their supporting Stanhope. Say for me, at the same time, what I have not found time to say for myself, how much

* Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, cap. xii. vol. ii. p. 149.

I felt flattered by the proof of their good opinion. I am very glad you have a candidate for Beverley.

In haste, ever yours,

W. P.

HENRY DUNCOMBE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

May 17, 1796.

Dear W.

I am just setting out for Buxton, whose waters I never wanted more. It is in parting with valuable friends we feel how much we love them. I am actually in that predicament. I wish you health, and happiness, and success. I know how delicate your situation is with respect to any interference at the approaching election. I shall only say, give my poor boy your advice now and hereafter. To you and Muncaster I bequeath him. Heaven bless you.

I am most truly yours,

H. D.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO HIS MOTHER.

Wakefield, June 16, 1796.

My dearest Mother,

I am about to do that which, on the first view, might almost seem a breach of filial respect; but on se-

rious reflection, as in the presence of God, I am clear that I am right, and therefore I persevere. That cannot be disrespectful which is the result of affection; and under an idea of honouring, to abstain from that which might benefit a parent, must be deemed at least a weakness, to which one ought not in duty to give way. My eyes are but very indifferent, and my stock of leisure not large, I must therefore write more hastily, and measure my phrases less scrupulously than I should wish to do in such a case; but writing to you, my dearest mother, I am not afraid of being misconstrued.

Your perceptions are naturally quick, your discernment clear, and your temper warm. In such a temperament of qualities, when the infirmities of age begin to press and gall, it is requisite that there be a double guard against both the reality and the appearance of fretfulness. The latter may exist without the former; and is it breaking in upon the respect I ought to bear you, to say it has often given me much pain, during the last time or two of my being with you, to witness in you somewhat of this appearance, for I really believe it is appearance rather than reality? Indeed, it is this belief which much encourages me to mention the matter to you, because, knowing you to be really grateful to God for the blessings you enjoy, I am hurt at your affording to those around you any cause for suspecting the contrary. I have said enough — I hope not too much. God knoweth that at this moment my earnest supplications are offered up to Heaven for your happiness; and trusting as I do, that through the mercies of

God in Christ you will obtain an entrance into eternal glory, I am solicitous, so far as I am able, to brighten your crown, and to watch against the encroachment of any rust or blemish which might insensibly grow upon it, at a season when its proprietor cannot, from bodily infirmity, keep it so sedulously as in the full vigour of the faculties. May it please God to bless my honest endeavour, and may I have reason hereafter to know it has been of use. I regret, my dearest mother, that from local circumstances I am able so little to contribute to your comfort, so little to assist in cheering the languor and enlivening the tedium of your advancing years: but though situated as you are, I could not do this without a dereliction of those public duties, to the discharge of which Providence has destined me, yet my prayers are often poured out for you; and I implore that gracious Being, "who knoweth whereof we are made," to support and comfort you. May He enable you to bear with cheerfulness whatever trials it shall please His allwise Providence to lay upon you; and may He at length, by an easy dismission, receive you into that blessed world, where there is no more sickness, nor any more pain, but all is unmixed joy, and love, and peace for ever.

Farewell, my dearest mother. I trust I have never more than now proved myself your dutiful, as well as your affectionate son,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P. S.—It may not be amiss to assure you, that I have

written this altogether of my own motion, and that no human being has any idea of my so doing, or intending so to do.

Don't trouble yourself to write an answer; but as I shall be anxious to be assured that this letter reaches you in safety, be kind enough to let me have one single line by any other pen, to say you have received it. Direct to me at Halifax.

THE REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Paul's Cray, Kent, July 21, 1796.

My very dear Sir,

Necessity obliged me to run beyond my usual time, but I have long had my present two or three days' retreat in prospect, and purposed, if I could attain it, to make my payment. You were very good to write first, and without taking notice of my tardiness.

You say true, my dear sir: I seem to myself to stand upon a cliff, from whence I contemplate with compassion and thankfulness the many whom I see tossed about upon the tempestuous sea of public life. But you have no claim to my pity, though you have a just right to my prayers, and a frequent place in them, because I believe you are the Lord's servant, and are in the post which He has assigned you; and though it appears

to me more arduous, and requiring more self-denial than my own, I know that He who has called you to it can afford you strength according to your day, and I trust He will, for He is faithful to His promise.

I answered for you in my own mind, that if, after taking the proper steps to secure your continuance in parliament, you had been excluded, it would not have greatly grieved you. You would have looked to a higher hand, and considered it as a providential intimation that the Lord had no farther occasion for you there. And in this view, I think, you would have received your *quietus* with thankfulness. But I hope it is a token for good that He has not yet dismissed you.

Some of His people may be emphatically said not to live to themselves. May it not be said of you? Would you not be glad to have more command of your time, and more choice of your company, than your situation will admit? You meet with many things which weary and disgust you, which you would avoid in a more private life. But then they are inseparably connected with your path of duty; and though you cannot do all the good you wish for, some good is done, and some evil is probably prevented by your influence and that of a few gentlemen in the House of Commons like-minded with yourself. It costs you something — many hours, which you could employ more to your own personal satisfaction, and exposes you to many impertinences from which you would gladly be exempted; but if, upon the whole, you are thereby instrumental in

promoting the cause of God and the public good, you will have no reason to regret that you had not so much leisure for more retired exercises as some of us are favoured with. Nor is it possible at present to calculate all the advantages that may result from your having a seat in the House at such a time as this. The example, and even the presence, of a consistent character, may have a powerful, though unobserved, effect upon others. You are not only a representative for Yorkshire, you have the far greater honour of being a representative for the Lord, in a place where many know Him not, and an opportunity of showing them what are the genuine fruits of that religion which you are known to profess.

Though you have not, as yet, fully succeeded in your persevering endeavours to abolish the slave trade, the business is still in train; and since you took it in hand, the condition of the slaves, in our islands, has undoubtedly been already meliorated. I believe likewise that it is wholly owing to you that Johnson and Marsden are now in New Holland; and I trust that, notwithstanding all discouragements, the seed sown and sowing there will yet spring up to the glory of God. These instances, to which others with which I am not acquainted, might, I suppose, be added, are proofs that you have not laboured in vain.

It is true that you live in the midst of difficulties and snares, and you need a double guard of watchfulness and prayer. But since you know both your need of help, and where to look for it, I may say to you as

Darius to Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually is able to preserve and deliver you." Daniel, likewise, was a public man, and in critical circumstances; but he trusted in the Lord, was faithful in his department, and therefore, though he had enemies, they could not prevail against him.

Indeed the great point for our comfort in life is to have a well grounded persuasion that we are, where, all things considered, we ought to be. Then it is no great matter whether we are in public or in private life, in a city or a village, in a palace or a cottage. The promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee," is necessary to support us in the smoothest scenes, and is equally able to support us in the most difficult. Happy the man who has a deep impression of our Lord's words, "Without Me you can do nothing."

Through mercy I continue well, and hitherto competent for my public work; but I feel I grow older. I am within a fortnight of entering my seventy-second year. I think I have lived long enough for myself. The world, indeed, appears a poor thing to me now; yet I have no reason to be weary of living, for I am surrounded with comforts and mercies. I can think of nothing worth wishing for to make me more happy in temporals; but, alas! I dwell in Mesech, and Mesech dwells in me. What with the evils I feel within, and the sin and misery which I see on every side without, I should faint, were it not that I know whom I have believed, and am satisfied that all is in His hands, and that He does and will do all things well.

May the Lord bless you, my dear sir; may He be your sun and shield, and fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

I am your very affectionate, and much obliged,

JOHN NEWTON.

CHARLES GRANT, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Glasgow, July 30, 1796.

My dear Sir,

I have been desirous to give you some account of the progress of a party for which you are so kind as to be interested, but have not hitherto had an hour for correspondence since I left Buxton. The Sunday following our departure from thence we passed at Ambleside, whence we proceeded to Keswick, Cockermouth, Whitehaven, and Muncaster, where we spent three most agreeable days, and then, with the aid of Lord Muncaster's horses to Broughton, came again, by the way of Coniston, to Ambleside, and proceeded by Ulswater to Penrith. We had thus, though a hasty, yet a comprehensive view of the lakes, which every where raised in us sensations of wonder and delight. I had no conception that England afforded such scenes, and was most of all struck with the endless diversity of beauty which they presented. The young people were exquisitely gratified; and I was afraid that —— would have thrown himself into the cascade at Rydale, which was the first we saw (but was far surpassed afterwards). I am extremely glad that we have seen these scenes,

and we are particularly obliged to you for insisting on the route from Ambleside to Keswick, which, on the whole, we are inclined to prefer to every other view. I can hardly speak in terms sufficiently satisfactory to myself of the hospitable reception we had at Muncaster: it was every thing that was polite, attentive, and kind, and that could make politeness, attention, and kindness easy to us. I beg you will take the first occasion of mentioning to Lord M. how deeply we are impressed with all we met with at his mansion. There we saw new combinations of the grand and the beautiful: Lord Muncaster's improvements, the station he holds in that part of the world, his activity and patriotic spirit, raised my ideas (in such times as these especially) of his importance in society.

At Carlisle I paid a short visit to Dr. Milner, whom I was glad to see in his deanery, and in apparent good health and spirits. I heard, however, with concern from him, that you had been complaining after our departure from Buxton. I trust the cause was only slight and temporary, but am desirous to know, and request you will drop me a line, at Moy, near Torres, by Edinburgh. Our entrance into Scotland was by Annan and Dumfries, at the latter of which places we passed a Sunday. I went to three different places of worship in the course of the day, and they were all crowded. At all of them there was a good deal of the Gospel; but the minister of the principal church seemed to be one of Dr. Witherspoon's *moderate* men. We travelled through Ayrshire by Kilmarnock, a large manufacturing town, to this place. The appearance of

cultivation and improvement through this route greatly exceeded my expectation. Nothing, in fact, but ocular demonstration could have satisfied me that there was in Scotland a country so highly dressed as Ayrshire is. I think I am not extravagant in comparing it to Lancashire, which seemed to us one of the most beautiful counties in England; at the same time I must add, that all our party were disagreeably struck with the appearance of the common people, particularly the women and children, who generally go barefooted, which gives them a mean air, and that is heightened by an apparent want of cleanliness about their houses. The practice of going barefooted is a matter of taste rather than necessity; for the lowest person here has shoes, and on a Sunday is decently clothed and shod. I suppose as refinement advances it will extend to the personal habits of the people. At present a stranger (from England at least) must be shocked with some of the existing customs here. Allowing for some of these things, I take Glasgow to be one of the most pleasing cities in the island, beautifully situated on the Clyde, and in the midst of an ornamented country, built of stone, many of the houses grand, the streets regular, and full of people and of business.

We have been with the celebrated Mr. Dale to see his cotton mills * on the Clyde, twenty-five miles from Glasgow. The ride, chiefly along the banks of the Clyde, by a road made by Mr. Dale himself, is, in its kind, surpassed by nothing we have seen in our tour; it is, in short, a continual variety of beautiful nature "to

* At Lanark, since in the occupation of Mr. Owen.

advantage dressed." The situation of the cotton mills is most romantic, in one of the wildest and deepest recesses formed by the mountainous, rocky, and woody borders of the Clyde, at the head of which there are stupendous waterfalls, amidst scenery wonderfully picturesque. But the most interesting sights there are Mr. Dale's works, his management, and his people. There are in all near two thousand persons employed: about five hundred of them children from poor-houses, &c. These he clothes, feeds, and *instructs*, for which purpose he keeps eighteen schoolmasters. He has also a surgeon for them: they are carried regularly every Sunday to church: he occasionally speaks to them himself. They look very healthy, clean, and cheerful; and it was a most interesting scene to see four or five hundred such objects, met together to a wholesome breakfast in a clean room, stand up whilst God was honoured in asking a blessing on their food. He has there also the dumb and the blind: several of the latter we saw weaving cloth. This is, on the whole, a country which, I think, you ought to see; and I hope you will soon find an opportunity.

GRANVILLE SHARP, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.*

Garden Court, Temple, August 4, 1796.

Dear Sir,

While your friend remains in power I have one favour to solicit. I ask it for the sake of his own credit, as well as for the credit of his partners in administration, that they may no longer lie under the suspicion of being

* Docketted "Granville Sharp about La Fayette."

accessary to the oppression of a worthy man whose intentions were always disinterested and patriotic; I mean the Marquis de la Fayette, who, with his amiable family (I believe) are still most cruelly and unjustifiably detained in an Austrian or Hungarian bastile! My application to you in favour of this unhappy gentleman has, I trust, some grounds of propriety.

He was a leading member of the late society in France for the abolition of the slave trade; and I received likewise several very sensible and humane letters from himself, as an individual, on that subject, to which, I believe, he was very sincerely attached; and on that ground alone I earnestly beg the immediate exertion of your best interest with your friend while he continues in power, that an immediate application may be made for the release of the unfortunate Marquis and his oppressed family, whilst administration continue to have any remains of influence with the Austrian court, lest a separate peace between that power and France should render it impossible hereafter for Mr. Pitt to serve him.

The Marquis was really a royalist, — I mean a promoter of a duly limited monarchy, according to the free constitution of England, to which he and many other worthy Frenchmen in 1789 were most enthusiastically attached; so that it will be no derogation from the proper character of an English minister to apply strenuously for the poor Marquis's release. I remain, with great esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

GRANVILLE SHARP.

JEREMY BENTHAM, ESQ.* TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's Square Place, September 1, 1796.

My worthy Friend,

Extraordinary crisises call for extraordinary measures, and may even throw a vest of gravity on what might otherwise seem ridiculous. Read the extract underneath; it may serve as a text for the practical discourse that follows it.

"Paris, 26th Thermidor (13th August), executive directory. Public audience of the 20th Thermidor (7th August). (Extract from the) Speech of Mr. Vincent Spinola, envoy extraordinary from the Republic of Genoa to that of France. 'My fellow-citizens have cast their eyes upon me: they have thought that he who has so often had assurances of confidence from the representatives and generals of the French Republic will have, citizens directors, some title to yours.'

"Reply of the president of the executive directory to Mr. Spinola. Concluding passage: — 'The executive directory sees with satisfaction that the Genoese government has chosen for its representative with the French Republic a citizen who has acquired the reputation of being a friend to humanity, and to the liberty of French republicans.'"

Above, you see the occasional cause of an idea, which, however whimsical, and whether practicable or no, proves at least to have something like a foundation in precedent and experience. We must, sooner or later, have done fighting with Pandæmonium, and upon that occasion

* Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, cap. xiii. vol. ii. p. 171.

may find it advisable to look out for some sort of a candle to hold to the princes of the devils. Waving devils and candles, might it not contribute to smooth the approach to peace, if in the steps taken, whatever they may be, towards that end, use were made in some shape or other of some person, the choice of whom might, upon the strength of some conspicuous and incontestable attribute, stamped, as it were, upon his forehead, appear intended purposely as a compliment to them, and indicative of a disposition to honour and flatter them? Now, then, my good friend, where is that sort of person, the choice of whom, for such a purpose, could be more likely to prove flattering to them than that of one of the chosen few, on whom they took it in their heads to confer that sublimest of all earthly honours, — that highest of all degrees in the climax of equality, — the title of French citizen? Looking over the list, among the seventeen of which it is composed, I observe six British; and among these six, none but yourself and your humble servant, that are not reputed republicans, unless it be your journeyman labourer in the vineyard of the slave trade, Mr. Clarkson, of whose sentiments in constitutional matters I am not apprised: what say you, then, to an expedition to Paris upon occasion, properly dubbed and armed, — not à la J——n *, to devour the country, but à la Wilberforce, to give peace to it? The knight of Yorkshire at any rate; his fellow-citizen, if so please his knightship in quality of his humble squire, to keep his armour in order, and brush his shoes?

As to yourself, every man, since Thales gave him the

* Lord Hawkesbury (Jenkinson).

hint, "knows himself," at least, as much of himself as a man likes to know; and therefore of yourself, speaking to yourself, I need say nothing.

As to your obscure and humble would-be follower, who has the prophet-like property of being still more unknown in his own country than in the next; in addition to the grand article above spoken of, the following are the titles that might help to recommend him to an embrace of condescending fraternity from the five kings.

1. A sketch of the Panopticon plan, printed by order of their second assembly, with a letter of mine before it; a sort of certificate of civism, such as no other non-Frenchman that I know of could display.

2. An invitation in form, given me here by Talleyrand in the name of the Directory of the then department of Paris, during the Duc de la Rochefoucault's presidentship, to go and set up Panopticons of different sorts there. Witnesses at least, and for aught I know, the minute, are still in existence.

3. In Brissot's, as well as Mirabeau's periodicals, flaming eulogiums of some extracts translated from my papers on the judicial establishment, which I sent to the first assembly, (before they had taken to plundering, &c.) and which the Abbé Sieyes (proverbial there for jealousy and self-sufficiency) prevented, in spite of the endeavours of the Duc de la Rochefoucault, Brissot, and others (appearing in some measure from some letters of theirs in my possession)—prevented, I say, from being translated by authority and printed.

4. An acquaintance made in London with Brissot, in the days of his obscurity and innocence, followed by

marks of esteem and confidence on his part, evidenced by a bundle of letters of his, beginning 25th January, 1783, ending 6th November, 1790, relics of that protomartyr, which happen to remain unburnt, and which a noble * Scotch worshipper of his is welcome, at any time, to kiss without a fee.

Brissot used his endeavours afterwards to get me returned to the convention, and, but for the instances of a friend of mine (who happening to be there at the time feared its drawing me into a scrape), was likely, as that friend afterwards told me, to have got my name added to those of Paine and Priestley: — the whole business as perfectly strange to me till months afterwards, as to the pope of Rome. Don't let it mortify you too much, but we three (two P.'s and a B.) were made grandees of the first class, set down *in petto* for Solons, fenced off from the *gens-en-sous-ordre* by a semicolon, an *impayable* semicolon! We being thus intrenched and enthroned, after us they let in a parcel of "corn consumers," the Wilberforces, the Washingtons, *fortemque Gyam*, *fortemque Cloanthum.*

Some friends of mine (*à propos* of Brissot) used to be attacking me in those early days for having any thing to say to so poor a creature. My defence used to be that he seemed a quiet, good-humoured sort of man, and was of use to me in procuring books and literary information.

5. The business your excellency would have to do would consist principally, I suppose, in chaffering about colonies. As to this matter, while vanity would join with duty in engaging us both to strain every nerve in

* Lord Lauderdale.

the endeavour to retain whatever you were intrusted to haggle for, the printed opinions of your humble servant would give him that sort of advantage in point of argument, and afford him such a certificate of sincerity in the use of it as can hardly be to be found elsewhere. What the minister says to you now is no more than what the man said to you at the beginning: we are an infatuated people; you a wise one: — give us what we want — you see it will be no loss to you! In this point of view, how much fitter a man with such opinions, than a man who could never open his lips without impressing people with the importance of the very objects which it was his business to prevail upon them to give up!

True it is, that were they to see an analysis I have by me of their favourite Declaration of Rights, there is not, perhaps, the being upon earth that would be less welcome to them than I could ever hope to be; but there it lies, with so many other papers that would be equally obnoxious to them, very quietly upon my shelf; and though no man can be more averse to simulation even in the best cause, yet no man, according to my conception, is bound to suppress any ideas that he happens to have in common with those whom his business is to conciliate, still less to fling at their heads any that he happens to entertain in opposition to theirs, because no man is bound to get his own head broke to no use. With these reserves, what renders every thing of simulation the less necessary in the case in question is, a general principle of human nature, a certain propensity we have as often as we observe a man's ideas meeting our own in a prominent point or two, to jump to the like con-

clusion with regard to all manner of other points; but of all people the most remarkable for their precipitancy in this way are surely the French. I met with a Frenchman once whom nothing would persuade that Priestley, whom he had been talking with, was not an atheist as well as himself, because they happened to agree on some points relative to matter and free will. Priestley foamed with rage at the imputation, but the Frenchman was not to be so taken in. Priestley, on his part, was even with him, for he would no more believe the Frenchman's atheism than the Frenchman his theism. If you and I, their adopted brethren, with our recorded merits, were to go over and shake hands with them, and call them fellow-citizens, we might say what we would for the first month at least: — they would no more believe it possible for us "to honour the king" who sent us, than the man believed it possible for Priestley "to fear God."

Were it their lot to send to us on a similar errand, who the messenger were, so long as there were nothing about him particularly offensive, would here, I am apt to think, be regarded as a matter of very considerable indifference; but in their instance, the examples of the vent they give in this way to their humour, good or bad, are as abundant as they are notorious. This Spinola, and I believe many others on the one side, and on the other, Carletti the Sardish envoy, whom they shut the door against the other day, the pope's nuncio, and the Sardinian minister, whom they sent packing, with others who might be found, I dare say in plenty, if there were any use in it.

Suppose them, on the other hand, applied to in the

ordinary way; suppose them, in that case, refusing to treat with your great friend; suppose their insolence to rise to such a pitch (and to what pitch may not French insolence rise) would not his option be rather an awkward one? — to deprive the country of one of two things, the benefit of his services, or the blessings of peace! Would it not be a satisfaction to you, before the dilemma came upon him, to step in and save him from it? However slight the danger on one hand, however uncertain the efficacy of the preventive on the other, yet the expedient being so simple and so cheap, might it not be worth while to take the chance of it? Has not there been an instance? Tuscany, was it not? (the events of this time succeed one another with such rapidity, that without a particular call for attention the impression vanishes.) Has there not been an instance of their actually forcing a sovereign to discard his principal minister? There is some difference, indeed, between that country, whatever it may have been, and this country, it is true; and thence comes the hope that in our instance they might be satisfied with that sort of complimentary submission proposed; (though an instance of mere common civility, and no more than what good breeding would join with prudence in dictating between man and man;) whereas in the other case, nothing short of dismission could be accepted.

There is the invasion, too, and though at the long run I should not much expect that many who came over on that errand would get back again, unless by a cartel; yet, make the best of it, the final destruction on one side

would be but an indifferent compensation for the intervening confusion on the other.

On an occasion like this, it is impossible for me to avoid thinking of an excellent friend of mine, an acquaintance of yours to boot, a veteran in the trade, who, in these hard times, adds great dignity to great worth, without a morsel of bread. I need scarce say how absurd it would be for me to name myself in company with him, were it not for the above-mentioned accidental peculiarities, but for which I should as soon have thought of offering myself for the command of an army as for any such purpose as the present. On the supposition of your declining the business, I would black his shoes with as much fidelity as yours, and would black them literally, rather than see him a sufferer by my means.

Your great friend, were this to reach his eye or his ear, might smile; but there are times in which, for a chance how faint so ever of being of use, a man may be excused for exposing himself to a smile; and, (if I may address myself to you, my good friend, as to a confessor,) when looking round me I observe those who, taken from a situation which was once my own, without any such marked though accidental recommendations, have given satisfaction in this very line, I fear not to say to myself *Ed io anche*,— I, too, am capable of going on an errand. Should the general idea happen to meet your approbation, make whatever you think best of it, nor let your friendship conceive, that because it is from me that the suggestion happens to have come, there is any necessity of my having any thing more to do with it; on the other hand, should I appear capable of being made useful,

make use of me in any way without reserve. Believe me, with the truest respect and affection,

Yours ever,

JEREMY BENTHAM.

P.S. — In the papers of this very day I read the following articles: —

Times, September 1st. "From the Paris papers, August 25–27. Italy, August 6.: the French, it is said, require the exclusion of the Chevalier Acton from the ministry of the court of Naples."

Herald, September 1st. "From the Paris papers August 25–27. Rome, July 27.: concluding sentence. 'The Chevalier Azzara was chosen by Mr. Mist, and Barbery was appointed to represent the pope. But in this first day the conferences were broken up, and M. Azzara declared he would not treat with Barbery, whom he looked upon as one of the principal causes of the ruin of the state.'"

LORD ST. HELENS TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Bristol, Hot Wells, September 6, 1796.

My dear Sir,

Our friend Bentham has sent me a copy of the very lively and entertaining, but most eccentrical, epistle that he addressed to you on the 1st instant. I differ from him, *toto cœlo*, as to his main arguments; being per-

suaded, first, that to endeavour to obtain peace by any unworthy flattery towards the French, or compliance with their silly pretensions, would be the least likely method of obtaining that object; and, secondly, that the said object, however highly desirable in itself, would, if obtained by such means, be not worth the having. I entirely subscribe to honest Fluellen's opinion, that "because the enemy is an ass and a fool, and a prating coxcomb, it is neither fitting nor seemly that we should also be asses and fools, and prating coxcombs;" but I am at the same time thoroughly convinced, that when your adverse party is a bully and a braggadocio, your only way of dealing is to stand up to him firmly and vigorously without abating one iota of your dignity and just pretensions, in ceasing to combat his absurdities and extravagance with the offensive and defensive weapons of truth and reason. Ergo, it seems to me that our friend would be the less recommendable for the office of negotiator with France from the circumstance he mentions of his own fraternity with Paine and Priestley, though quoad J. B. he would in many respects be very well qualified for it. As to yourself, my dear sir, the case is widely different; so much so, indeed, that were it necessary or consistent with decorum, I am certain that I could easily demonstrate that there is no person in the king's dominions who would be, in every respect, so well qualified as yourself for the office in question, should you be inclined to undertake it.

I now come to the main purpose of my letter, which is to beg and entreat that in case you should be inclined (which I can hardly suppose) to show our friend's letter

to Mr. Pitt, you will at least pause a little before you make that communication, as it appears to me that it could answer no useful purpose, and might very possibly injure our friend in Mr. Pitt's good opinion, as he does not know him so well as we do. I hope to have the pleasure of finding you in town about a fortnight hence, and in the mean time must entreat that you will not give yourself the trouble of answering this, as I am upon the ramble, and shall very possibly have left Bristol before an answer could reach me.

I have not yet written to B. but probably shall to-morrow.

Most entirely yours, my dear Sir,

ST. HELENS.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, BART.

London, December 10, 1796.

My dear Sir John,

I was really concerned to hear you were not in Parliament, and if not in one House, should be glad that you were in the other, though certainly it is in the House of Commons that a mind as active as yours will be able to get through most business. Under this impression, it is no more than justice to myself to say that I have fought many a battle for you, often when you have known and suspected nothing about it. If I should now be able to assist in arranging this matter, I shall be glad of it, because I am truly sorry that any one who has

so much energy should be thrown into the back ground just when he should naturally occupy a very forward station.

All this to you in private. Now let me add, with great truth and frankness, that I cannot conceive Mr. Pitt to have made an engagement which he would not afterwards fulfil; but must rather suppose there has been some misconception on one side or the other. However, I do not say this from having talked with him about it, because I have really studiously avoided touching on this particular topic. I must also add that your letter to me would not have had less weight if it had been unaccompanied with that from *my constituent.* However, I conceive that here you have only thought me like the rest of the world. I should think I acted very unworthily if I were to suffer such a circumstance to prejudice me against the real merits of the question. With every good wish and real esteem, I remain, dear Sir John,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

THOMAS MAUDE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Wensley, December 13, 1796.

Sir,

Let me desire you to correct a mistake in my "Instructions to the Cape of Good Hope," if you have not parted with the paper — For Volney, read Monsieur le Vaillant.

In return I shall give you a character received last week from Dover, which may make you smile, even in this gloomy weather.

The succession of lay fellowships in Trinity Hall has not yet reached me, though I am above a doctor's standing; and so tenacious are the great men in possession, that there is not a lay fellow of our college, Trinity Hall, who is not in the receipt of upwards of 1000*l.* per annum, and many of 5000*l.* or 6000*l.* One instance I will give you in this neighbourhood, a very curious character, Lord —— who lives near Hythe, about eight miles hence. This man has been Fellow of Trinity Hall above fifty years, and is now upwards of eighty: he lives in affluence, and has his public days once a week. He suffers his beard to grow in imitation of the philosophers of old. He bathes in the sea all winter through, and instead of drying himself with towels in the common way, he rolls himself on the beach till he becomes dry, and then walks up to his house (which is not far from the shore) in a state of nature. He has frightened many people who have accidentally seen him and taken him for a marine monster or merman. Ex hoc uno disce omnes. Yet there are people who will tell you we have no abuses. It is certainly an Augean stable; and if a Hercules could be found to cleanse it properly, without injuring the fabric, he might truly be said to deserve well of his country.

We have had here the Tunisian ambassador: he admired much our apparatus for firing red-hot shot, asked many pertinent questions, and seemed to be a sensible man. Lord Downe and myself were the only persons

that could converse with him, through the mediatorial language of Italian. He made us both a present of snuff, highly scented with the otto of roses, that would even have regaled *Omiah*, though (as he answered a lady who offered him a pinch out of her box) his nose was not hungry. I am, Sir,

Your much obliged and devoted

T. MAUDE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO Z. MACAULAY, ESQ.
(Governor of Sierra Leone.)

London, January 6, 1797.

My dear Sir,

We have an expression, "an Iliad in a nutshell." To say that this might be properly affirmed of my letter would seem rather an extraordinary speech, but yet there is a sense in which it would not be without a meaning. And when a friend, who is too much occupied to write long epistles, who is also debarred from the free use of his pen by a constitutional infirmity, sends to one who loves him, in a distant country, a few hasty lines as an assurance of kind regard and affectionate remembrance, the sheet has a value which is not to be estimated by the bulk of its contents, or the distinct meaning of every separate proposition contained in them. To such a value this letter is entitled; and it will not go beyond the truth in assuring you of my often thinking of you with affectionate interest and cordial approbation. There is something very striking

to my mind in the idea of the many various ways in which we are employed on earth, and of the identity of views and motives which may animate all the different modifications of employment. You are doubtless in the line which Providence has pointed out to you, — a most satisfactory consideration this, of which I am persuaded you feel the comfort.

News, public or private, you will hear from others, therefore I will break in upon you no longer, but hastily subscribe myself, with hearty affection,

Your faithful friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE REV. JOHN VENN.

Bath, January 18, 1797.

My dear Friend,

I have been kept silent more by not knowing well what reply to return to your question than by any other cause. It is really a thing greatly to be regretted that persons of solid piety should not feel it their duty to divest themselves of any peculiarities of manner, and to acquire some powers of conciliation in an age like this, when there is a prejudice against the evangelical doctrines themselves, and therefore the greater reason for taking all honest means for avoiding offences. I am not quite clear that any of the four you mention would do. It strikes me that —— would be better than any of them: he is a gentleman in his manners; he also preaches

written sermons. Indeed B——, I apprehend, would not object to doing this. If any one occurs to me better, I will let you know.

I should be glad to see your venerable father, and to receive his blessing before he is taken hence. There is something infinitely animating in the idea of an aged Christian being about to take his departure, when one can look forward for him with the confident hope one may indulge in your father's case. It is an impressive sight to behold a vessel entering the port after a voyage round the world; but how faint an image is this of that abundant entrance into the haven of everlasting security and rest, which is ministered to such a servant of God. Oh, my dear friend, this is a turbulent sea in which we are tossing. May it please God, and I trust of His infinite mercy it will please Him, to carry us safely through for His Son's sake. What a meeting will it be, if, as I would hope, it will take place, when we shall meet with a consciousness of parting no more FOR EVER. Oh that that word for ever were more present with me, staring me in the face with its gigantic characters, and shaming to nothing (their proper size) whatever of earthly things should dare to dispute with it the claim to my attention! But, as poor Bates used to say, "we are all in such hurries." Yet a man is not to sit with his arm up in his elbow-chair musing in barren speculation. That is pleasant enough, but it is not religion. I have been scribbling (by candlelight) when I ought to have been undressing for bed; I must now lay down my pen. Farewell, my dear sir. I think of you with the warmest affection, and with solid pleasure. You are right, I verily

believe, you are right, where you differ from many whom I esteem, but of whom I think that they bow with too implicit submission to ——. But I shall be beginning again; so good night. I beg my kind remembrance to Mrs. V. and your father, and am,

Ever yours,
W. W.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

April 21, 1797.

My dear Sir,

I know not where you are, but I suppose a letter sent to Palace Yard will soon find you.

I deferred thanking you for your very kind and very acceptable present, till I could say I had read it. Indeed, I have not properly *read* it yet, but I have *devoured* it. My first perusal, though without missing a word, has been hasty. I hope to peruse it more leisurely. But from this cursory survey, I trust I am warranted to tell you, that I have already found it profitable, for instruction, for correction, and for reproof; and therefore I must wait upon you with an intercalary letter.

I think you know by this time, that I do not much deal in ceremonials and compliments. But I should stifle the feelings of my heart, were I wholly to suppress mentioning the satisfaction, the pleasure, the joy, your publication has given me. To God be all the glory. The best men are but instruments of His pleasure, and have no sufficiency as of themselves even to think aright.

We can remember the time, when you could not have written this book, and when I would not have read it, if it had been put into my hands. The difference between what we are, and what we once were, and what many still are, is all of grace. According to His mercy He has saved us.

I had written thus far, when the postman brought your letter. I am glad I made a beginning before it came. It is true, my dear sir, I am pretty much engaged *in my way;* but could you think it possible, that I should be content with dipping in a book of yours? Had you written upon any other subject, my love and respect for you would have made me impatient to read. On the other hand, had your book come without a name, without any circumstance that could lead me to guess at the author, it would have engrossed my attention. You compel me, Sir, to say, that I deem it the most valuable and important publication of the present age that I have seen: especially as it is *yours.* There are many persons both in church and state, who, from their situations, are quite inaccessible to us little folks: what we preach they do not hear, what we write they will not read. But your book must and will be read; and where else can they meet with a representation of real religion, so complete, so totus teres et rotundus, so forcible and yet so gentle, so candid and yet so explicit? The Lord has enabled you to honour Him, and now He has highly honoured you.

But chiefly my heart congratulates you on the goodness of the Lord who has so guided you by His wisdom, and supported you by His power, that after moving for

more than twelve years amidst the embarrassments, snares, and trials incident to your public life, you can publish such a book, without any just apprehension of that retort, Medice sana teipsum. You have long been a spectacle. Many have watched for your halting, and it is probable that many have attempted to throw you down. But the Lord has been with you. What a striking appeal have you made to the consciences of your numerous acquaintances and connections, so that if they will not yield to your arguments, they must, however unwillingly, be convinced by your example, of the salutary tendency of the doctrines of the Gospel! That the Lord has raised you up to bear such a testimony, at a time like this, to His truth, revives and strengthens a hope, which at some seasons I have found it difficult to maintain, that deserving as we are of the severest national calamities, He will not yet give us up.

I cannot depend upon our fleets and armies (we have just now a signal and unexpected proof how little they are to be depended on). But I trust there are a number, though few if compared with the bulk of the nation, who are like-minded with yourself; whose eyes affect their hearts; who are standing in the breach, in the spirit of humiliation and prayer, pleading for mercy, and mourning not only over the sins of others but their own. The Lord has left us a remnant, and I trust not a very small one collectively, and they have interest with the Great Master of the storm. They have access to a throne of grace, and if He gives them a heart to pray, He will hear them. There were but a few of these in

Isaiah's time, but they were sufficient to defeat Sennacherib, not by swords and spears, but upon their knees. These, in my view, are the chariots and horses of our Israel. Mighty things have been done by prayer; and the Lord's hand is not shortened nor His ear heavy.

At present, clouds and darkness are about His throne; His footsteps amid the sea, untraceable by us. But we are sure that His designs and His methods of accomplishing them are worthy of Himself. His friends and His enemies are equally His servants though in different respects. A great man will not employ his children to sweep His stables. Methinks all Europe, or what we call Christendom, is a great Augean stable. God has sent His scavengers into it; and when they have performed the dirty work according to His will, He will let them know that while they thought they were only pleasing themselves, they were doing what He appointed to be done.

But though we cannot trace Him, we have good warrant to trust Him. All these commotions shall issue in the advancement of His glory, the spread of His Gospel, and the welfare of His body the church. For these great points the earth was at first formed, and is still preserved. And when these are fully accomplished, the united concerns of the rest of mankind will not prevail for its preservation for a single day. When the great drama is completed, the theatre will be destroyed.

In the mean time, He says it shall be well with the righteous. Blessed are they who know His name and put their trust in Him — He will be their sun and their shield, their guide and guard to the last step! He will

either avert the evil they fear, or (which, upon the whole, amounts to the same thing) He will make their strength according to their day. As to this world, they may say with him of old, and much more justly, Omnia mea mecum porto. For their treasure is in Heaven, and they, as strangers and pilgrims, are passing on, and will soon be at home, where no storms blow, where the voice of war shall be heard no more. There sin and sorrow, its individua comes, shall not follow them. They shall flee away, and joy and gladness shall come forth to meet them, and introduce them to Him, who will wipe all tears from their eyes. Then they shall weep no more.

By the time you return to business your book will be well known. I rejoice to think what additional weight it will give to all you say or do, as in other places, so especially in the House of Commons. Oh! that a friend of mine there might be stimulated by it to support an equal consistence of character! The Lord bless you, my dear Sir. I have only room to subscribe myself

Your most affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

June 3, 1797.

My dear Sir,

How long have I waited and wished for such intelligence as, I am told, appeared in the papers yesterday! When dear Mr. Thornton married, I took the liberty

to express my hope that you would one day follow his example. For though I was sensible that your line of public service afforded constant employment for your time and thoughts, I believed there was a something, yea, many things, in domestic life, which would add to your personal comfort, enlarge the sphere of your sympathies, and give you diversified opportunities of exhibiting the Christian character, to the praise of Him, whose you are, and whom you serve.

I have lived to see my desire, in this matter, accomplished, and to congratulate you on the event. When the Lord's hour came, which, like the time of tide, must be waited for, His Providence directed you, I doubt not, to the right person. A union has now taken place. My part and pleasure will be to pray (and I trust I shall not pray in vain), that it may be mutually happy to yourselves, and a blessing to your connections; that it may not only be for the term of this frail life, but may subsist and flourish in a better climate, when the transient considerations upon which it was first founded shall be but like the remembrance of a dream when we awake.

It is needless to say that I am a stranger to Mrs. Wilberforce; but, I believe, she will readily admit me into the number of her ideal friends, if you will please to inform her of two points; though, I believe, neither you nor I can fully express them. I mean your great kindness to me, and the great respect, regard, and affection which I bear to you; which commenced with the hour I first saw you in my vestry, and has been ever since upon the increase.

When I published "Letters to a Wife," I presented a copy to you; I could do no less. I knew you would accept it favourably as a token of my regard, but I expected no more. I supposed that if you opened it and read a page in any part, you would think it too romantic to deserve your farther notice. But you are now in the same school. I have sometimes thought that Solomon could scarcely be better qualified, by experience, to treat on the subject of human grandeur, than I am to write or speak of the marriage state. It is true, at my first setting out, and I fear to the end of our journey, there was, on my side, a degree of quixotism and idolatry, for which I have cause to be ashamed and humbled all my days; yet the Lord was merciful, and He taught me, by degrees, that nothing short of Himself could satisfy the vast capacity for good with which He had formed my soul.

If two persons are happily united in affection, in faith, and hope, as helpmeets in promoting the same final cause, and fellow-heirs of eternal life, their chief danger, I was going to say, is lest they should be too happy. But the Lord, who loves them, will take care to prevent this danger. By the wise and gracious appointment of Him, who considers our frame and our situation, there is a per contra side. A new set of feelings is awakened, new and unexpected, at least, untried, sources of inquietude and anxieties are opened; and the pains, perhaps, are fully proportioned to the pleasures. The tender heart finds enough to bear while single, in such a world as this, but when doubled in wedlock, and multiplied in children, it stands as a broader mark for the

arrows which we can neither foresee nor avoid. And we are liable to suffer, not only in ourselves, but perhaps more keenly in the persons of those whom we love. But we may say with the Greek, nisi periissem, periissem. He who loves us gives us a thousand daily proofs that he delights in our prosperity, so far as we can safely bear it; and if we are in heaviness there is a need-be for it. These painful dispensations are necessary to keep us from sleeping upon the enchanted ground, and to make us not only say, but feel, that this is not, cannot be, our rest, for it is polluted. Here our roses grow upon thorns. Vanity, if not vexation of spirit, is entwined with all our earthly comforts.

Though not in an elevated situation, I think I have known as much of this world's good as it is capable of affording, especially in wedded life. Yet how few of my most favoured days could I wish, or be willing, to live over again? and I am sure I would not retrace the two last years of our connection for the empire of the whole earth. But the Lord is good. And though I have often foolishly thought that if the desire of my eyes should be taken from me, the sun would shine to me in vain, I believe, taking all things together, I have been more comfortable since she left me than I was before.

I cannot easily write upon this subject without becoming an egotist. I know you will bear with me. You have long encouraged me to use entire freedom, and released me from forms. My heart is full. I said in my Anniversary for 95 (which therefore was my last), *The Lord has healed the wound He made.* He

has so indeed: I can say from my heart He has done all things well. But the scar remains. She is still almost continually present to my waking thoughts. Indeed, I cherish the dear remembrance, because I find it powerfully excites the exercise of gratitude and humiliation, when I consider how long she was spared to me, and how justly I deserved to lose her every day from the first.

When we have completed our appointed number of services and trials, according to the will of Him who bought us with His blood, we hope to be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. O what a transition will that be! Then no clouds will obscure our sun; then our sun will go down no more. And may we not indulge the thought — that we shall there have some peculiar interest in those whom we most loved, with whom we took sweet counsel, walked with to the house of God in company, and were instrumental in promoting each other's salvation? Shall we not then look back together upon the way by which the Lord led us through this wilderness, and, by a clearer light than we have now, be able to review and recount the Ebenezers we set up to His praise, for all our escapes, supports, and deliverances? Then, if not before, I believe we shall add our sharpest trials to the list of our greatest mercies.

I hope, in good time, you will favour the public with a smaller and cheaper edition of your valuable, your invaluable, book. It is certainly best calculated (where I pray the Lord to make it very useful) for the higher classes in life; and, perhaps, is above the level of the

very lowest. But there are multitudes in the middle ranks who might profit by the perusal, and yet may be discouraged from purchasing it at the present price. I hear the second edition is gone. I could wish you had printed 5000 at first — but it is a foolish wish, because it comes too late. No family should be without it.

As my quarter-day is near at hand, I may tender this as prompt payment, a little before the time; and you will please to give me credit for it, if I should not be able to write so soon.

Horrida tempestas cœlum contraxit—but the Lord reigns. I trust we are like Noah in the ark. I think his voyage was not very *pleasant*, but he had the comfort of knowing that he was *safe*.

Please to give my respects to Mrs. Wilberforce. She now has a share in all that I owe you, especially in my prayers, that the Lord may bless you in yourselves, in each other, in all your concerns, and be your sun and shield, your guide, counsellor, and comforter through life. I may hope to go home before you, as I am far in my seventy-second year. But yet a little while, and I trust we shall meet before the throne.

Believe me to be

Your most affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

THE DEAN OF CARLISLE, DR. MILNER, TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Hull, June 7. 1797.

My dear Sir,

I arrived here on Saturday last; which day was as much like a winter's day as could be, both in boisterous wind and cold rain. — I am a little relieved to-day, and hope to tend to Carlisle shortly. I have not yet stirred out; so have not seen Mrs. W——. It is most true that all the time I am writing about my own affairs, I am thinking of yours.

Remember me always affectionately to your *better half*, and explain to her, at proper times, the oddities of your old but sincere friend; otherwise, I fear, her favourable disposition towards me will weaken and not strengthen. My earnest prayer is that this change in both your situations may be for mutual good.

Nothing can be more awful than public affairs.—If I were Pitt, or the K——, I would come down to the House, and, first, beseech unanimity; secondly, desire that all hands would unite in saving the nation, *i. e.* getting out of the scrape before they thought of reforming it; thirdly, I would solemnly promise to take the sense of the nation at large on the subject of reform, as soon as all was safe. For I say this, if the bulk of property be for reform, then reform cannot be stopped. I don't think they are or will be; therefore I would number the whole nation, which might easily be done; and thus I would find out whether the bulk of property, or of housekeepers, &c. &c. really desired a reform, or were content with the present

constitution. I am convinced that such a proceeding would either set the question at rest, or would put it on a different footing from the present: *e. g.* if it turned out that property were against reform, then it would be nearly reduced to this — Shall we have universal suffrage? Let the real sense of the nation be found, and the lists printed; and let the different ways of conceiving this matter be stated, and let the people be classed. Objection — There will be a great number of hypocrites, who will pretend a moderate reform, and *mean* more: Answer — I think the question might be so stated as to show what was the number of such sort of people. In short, I think it would be a great thing to find out the real sense of the people, if you were a year or two about it. Then I further think, that if government, in that period, would employ good hands to state, ad pŏpulum, briefly the dangers of too popular a reform, they would strengthen themselves most amazingly.

I believe the above is the true way to get out of all difficulties — to disconcert rascals, and to unite honest men.

Oh, how I wish they would take such a step!

I also wish that a very respectable commission would go down to these sailors.

Yours, in fear and anxiety,

J. Milner.

TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Saturday, June 24, 1797.

Good Sir,

Your benevolence, I trust, will pardon the intrusion of a stranger, impatient to express his heartfelt gratitude for the high obligations which he (perhaps with thousands besides) owes you, nor will a short detail of circumstances be altogether uninteresting to a man who has so eminently proved himself the friend of the human race. I have had, as it is called, a liberal education, and am of the profession of the law. Being of a temper naturally contemplative, when a child I received my first impressions of religion with a warmth and zeal not very common, I believe, to those of my age. My young mind, heated by the awfulness of the subject, hurried me into all the extravagance of devotion, whilst an inflamed imagination prepared me to receive, if an occasion had offered, the chains and prejudices of the absurdest superstition. In this state I continued till the approach of that season, when a physical change informs us that we have new difficulties to overcome, and more powerful temptations to withstand. I did, I fear, as many have done under similar circumstances — I wished to compromise, as I thought, with a severe master, and whilst I yielded to the gratification of a strong passion, promised implicit obedience in all other points; but I found when I had once passed the Rubicon, that it was impossible to continue stationary; languor and indifference were soon succeeded by a total neglect of all religious duties; and the attendance required by aca-

demic discipline was complied with reluctantly, when it could not be evaded by artifice. Though I broke the law, I did not as yet venture to question its authority; and the fear and trembling which accompanied my transgressions still continued to alloy the free indulgence of my passions.

In this state you will easily believe me a willing convert to the sophistry of any libertine unbeliever who, removing my scruples, by persuading me that I was in error, should teach me to sin with more satisfaction. An opportunity was not long wanting. I swallowed the new accommodating doctrine with avidity; and though my fears as well as my reason, under the influence of demonstration, forbade me to follow some of the most daring of my companions into the dark and comfortless regions of atheism, yet I learned enough to philosophise away morality, by framing the attributes of the Deity in subservience to my inclinations; arguing that, because He created me with passions, to indulge them could not be a crime. A vague and floating principle of honour, joined to this flexible system of philosophy, usurped the place of sound morals: I praised virtue in theory, but for the practice I consulted my convenience or rather inclination. I was charmed by the wit of Voltaire, idolised the sagacity and profound reasoning of Hume, and admired the eloquence and deep research of Gibbon. Cursed vanity! which could tempt men to the abuse of such talents, by undermining the hope, the comfort, and the happiness of their fellow-creatures, whilst they affected to be their best friends, — and for what mighty

purpose? Truly, that one should show his talent for ribaldry and sarcasm, the other his skill in sophistry and in perplexing the mind on subjects wisely set above the reach of the human understanding, and the third display his skill in the use of Gallic raillery, at the expense of an order of men that seems never to have offended him.

I beg pardon in thus deviating from the purpose of my letter, which was to express my gratitude to you for that dawn of peace which now beams on my mind, and permits me to anticipate my return to virtue and to wisdom, with a joy and thankfulness, which you, most excellent sir, can better conceive than I express. Sir, I shall be brief; it is now not many days since I first looked into your book, and I do confess that I was induced to read it, more from a curiosity to know what you could say on a subject on which I had made up my mind, than from a desire of giving up principles which, though they could not bestow happiness, must, I thought, be retained, because, as I imagined, they were adopted on the grounds of reason. But truth, divine truth, startled me: I felt its force; I felt, by sad experience, that my philosophical system could not give happiness, because it did not produce virtue. I felt, but for the timely reflections caused by your book, philosophy would have permitted me to commit a crime which might have embittered the remainder of my life. Well was it for me that it came to my assistance before I abused hospitality, seduced innocence, and planted a thorn in the breast of the most virtuous of wives and best of mothers — for I am a married man! Spare me

any further detail, and accept again my heartfelt gratitude: it is your due, for you have preserved me. Though it may be grateful to your philanthropic mind to hear that you have materially served a fellow-creature, who the individual is can little import you to know; he shall content himself in obscurity and at a distance to admire your excellent qualities, to pray for your happiness, and the full accomplishment of your virtuous undertakings.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Sunday, 1797.

My dear Muncaster,

You would perhaps guess in part the object of my visit last night, that it was to see our old friend Duncombe, who, I had understood you, was to arrive in town yesterday. But yet only in part would you have guessed right; for, I am sorry to say, my visit was not merely for the purpose of shaking you both by the hand, but that he might not learn suddenly, or from the newspapers, a piece of intelligence with which I had just become acquainted, and which I knew would distress him. This is no other than the death of Mason, occasioned by what seemed a slight accident, — hitting his shin against the step of a carriage. Nothing was thought of it till the Monday, it having happened on the Friday preceding, and on Wednesday it carried him off. Life, how uncertain! and how justly is it

said that in the midst of it we are in death! My telling you will answer the desired purpose.

Though I don't see you, my dear Muncaster, on a Sunday, I believe I may truly say I never pass one over without thinking of you. May God bless you, is the hearty wish and frequent prayer of

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Come and dine here to-morrow, at half after three; and if Duncombe be come, ask him if he will; only I shall be forced, you know, to leave him soon.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Sunday, 1797.

My dear Muncaster,

I read your paper on my way to Battersea Rise yesterday, and, languid as I was, it interested and enlivened me. Of this we will talk. I just hear from Pitt that all seems likely to be tolerably settled for the present at Portsmouth, and if there, probably elsewhere. But if we get a moment's respite, through the goodness of Providence, it should be wisely improved. Oh, my dear friend, that I could but see symptoms of the fear of God, and a sense of His displeasure! then I should begin to hope.

Yours, ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Much hurried, or prompted to write you a long letter.

CHARLES GRANT, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Battersea Rise, September 23. 1797.

Dear Sir,

When, in laying aside for a little a task that is yet unfinished, in order to answer your letter, I was about to indulge myself in all those feelings of friendship, affection, and pleasure, which it excites, a mournful recollection soon damped my thoughts. It is due to your sorrow and to my own, and highly to the dear friend who is gone (I need not say that I mean Mr. Eliot), to condole with you upon the loss of him. It will touch you, I am sure, almost as nearly as you will judge any event of that nature ought. You suffer at many points. For my own part, though I should, perhaps, never have used the freedom of calling him a friend whilst he lived, yet, now that he is gone, I feel for him with all the sentiments of true friendship; and I feel for the public and the church. There being but few such characters, his removal is both a misfortune and a dark omen. He, however, I trust, has made a happy exchange. He experiences, we may hope, the ineffable joy of entering into a safe and a blissful eternity. You have one grateful reflection, I believe, in the midst of your distress, that you contributed to make him think betimes (and of what importance now!) of the things of his peace. My affectionate sorrows follow him.

It is but just that when we grieve for what we lose, we should also be sensible of the mercies that remain to us. I have reason to be perfectly astonished at my own situation in this respect, and most cordially do I feel your happiness — that great accession of it of which you are so good as to tell me. May God continue it, and sanctify it, and, if he sees it good, even increase it! You could not have given me a more gratifying proof of friendship, than in this kind communication; and if I am not forward to use all the formal terms with you which belong to the language of friendship, as to which I have had various reluctances, from a just sense of disparity from my own poverty in requisite qualities, and perhaps from somewhat raised ideas of such a relation, yet you may believe that in whatever concerns things interesting to you, even in an inferior degree, I feel myself readily and naturally affected, as if they in some sort appertained to myself. I wish Mrs. W. the utmost success in her happy projects of utility. Such pursuits seem to offer at this time a peculiar relish, when the world affords little comfort, except in things connected with a better state. The rising generation is certainly the great subject to work upon, and our best hope, if we may venture to look forward to any distant day. I am lost in viewing this last political revolution; but fears predominate, — fears that this evil of war, with an enemy whom the righteous God has let loose to be the scourge of guilty nations, is for many days.

I have been late in beginning this letter, which my watch, lying before me, already admonishes me to close;

and I should not have written to-day, but to reply to your very kind invitation to Bath. * * *

With cordial good wishes to Mrs. W.

I remain, ever,

Very affectionately yours,

CHA. GRANT.

RT. HON. HENRY DUNDAS TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Walmer Castle, October 13. 1797.

My dear Sir,

I have your letter with its inclosure. I don't well know in whose department it is to regulate the business you write upon, but I am sure it is sufficiently within mine to justify my attending to it. The attempt to distress those honest and good people is very unwarrantable, and you may assure them that proper instructions will be sent out to prevent the continuance of such wanton abuse.

Last night brought us the accounts which had reached Deal of Admiral Duncan having come up with and beat very completely the Dutch fleet. The officer who is gone with the accounts is said to have landed at Margate, and gone from thence to London. I have no doubts of the news, but am quite in the dark as to the extent or consequences of the victory.

Mr. Pitt's health and spirits are mending here hourly. Lady Jane and my daughter join me in best respects to Mrs. Wilberforce, and I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours, sincerely,

HENRY DUNDAS.

DEAN OF CARLISLE [DR. MILNER] TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Hull, Tuesday, ——— 1797.

My dear Friend,

I know you profess never to be much moved at any event; still, I believe, if you had *seen* me for the last fortnight, your compassionate heart would have been deeply affected.

I must be very short: I am not able to write. A considerable fever, with an increase of asthma, came fast on my poor brother, and brought him to the very gates of death. It was agreed on all hands he could not have stood such another night as one of them was. He still remains in a most critical situation: I very much doubt whether he will recover; and if he does, it must be a very long time before he be fit for much. This is not fear, but reality.

My constant and persevering prayer has been for resignation and support; but alas! alas! I can just say, from experience, "The Lord knows how to be gracious if we could but trust Him," and no more.

I have neither seen my brother nor Mrs. W—— for a fortnight, nor have I tasted, during that time, two ounces of solid food.

Oh, my dear friend! there is a something on this occasion crowds on my mind so thick and so close, that I should have been overwhelmed but for God's special mercy.

The case is here: a deal of this is bodily. I am

weak, nervous, and worn out. "*Multis vulneribus oppressus, huic uni me imparem sensi.*" Then, from a very child, I have lived with this only brother; he has been kind to me beyond description, and a faithful adviser by my bedside, in illness, on a thousand occasions. Lastly, no man's affections, perhaps, were ever so little divided by a variety of friendships as mine. For years past, I have said ten thousand times, I would exhort a youth whom I wished to be happy in this world, *to know* more people, and love them less; yet God does not absolutely give me up to grief. Farewell; and remember me most affectionately to Mrs. W., who will drop a tear.

N. B. My brother's mind is so happy, that it can hardly be in a more desirable state. "The promises are sure." Yesterday I was told that he has had your book in his hands for several days, and says he likes it better and better, and says he should have written to you. When I talked to him last I could get nothing from him but, "Let not your heart be troubled," &c. &c.

I am very unfit to write, indeed; but duty presses me to say briefly, the election of a schoolmaster and lecturer is December 5th. It will be a sad thing if High Church be left deprived of both its pastors; i. e., morning and afternoon. I am utterly unable to see any body, or take any further steps; indeed, I believe I have done what I can for Thomason.

Yours, affectionately,

J. M.

JEREMY BENTHAM, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Old Palace Yard, May 22. 1798.

My dear Sir,

Whatever fragments of your time you may be able to spare for a would-be jailer, cannot (he thinks) be bestowed in any other way to so much advantage as by collaring the Solicitor-General, and making him say or do something to a stale letter which you have not as yet seen. The first point, viz. doing the business which was sent him to do from the Treasury so long ago as the 11th of December, is a point of strict duty, the other a matter of favour. You have doubtless seen the second order of the Committee of Finance, framed by, or concerted with, Mr. H. Thornton. It is only through the Solicitor-General * that any satisfactory answer can be given to it. I mention him as the only man of the two by whom what little business is done in the Law Office is done; as for the other (I speak from dear-bought experience), the only use he is of is to stop what the Solicitor-General has done, and to extract doubts from matter from which none could have been extracted by any body else. My correspondence is therefore exclusively with the Solicitor-General.

I inclose the letter. Whatever it may deserve, pray do not burn it, as it is the only copy I have. When Mr. Thornton has done with the rough brouillon he

* Sir John Mitford, afterwards Lord Redesdale.

took formerly, or with this memorial, I could wish to have them, but not before.

[Copy of the Letter to the Solicitor-General.]

Queen Square Place, Westminster, April 4. 1798.

Sir,

On the 21st of February, I understood from Mr. Romilly, that the Tothill Fields Penitentiary Bill was considered as coming under the rule which requires previous notices, and that for want of these notices, the bill cannot be brought in this session. I had, on the other hand, the satisfaction of learning that the bill itself was likely to be approved of. Things being in this state, the object of the liberty I am now taking is, to entreat the favour, that whatever be the decision upon the subject, it may be returned in form, as soon as may be, to the Treasury: because then, and not till then, the Treasury could act upon it; the Committee of Finance (who, in the course of their inquiries, have been led to take up the business) could act upon it; and I should be enabled to reap the benefit of so much of it as may prove to be in my favour; whereas till then I remain ignorant of my fate, chained down to the business, without the faculty of doing anything to forward it, or so much as the liberty of relinquishing it.

Another favour, should I be fortunate enough to obtain it, would be of the highest use to me. A misconception seems all along to have been prevalent at the Treasury, which has been of unspeakable prejudice to me throughout the whole course of this business — a misconception which would be removed in an instant by

a word or two from yourself, Sir, or Mr. Attorney General, but (I do believe) by nothing else. The notion is, that the business is a private business; the bill a sort of private bill, which it is incumbent on me, as well as competent to me, to solicit at my own expense, at my own risk, and in my own name. Accordingly, when Mr. Wilberforce was representing my situation the other day to Mr. Pitt, by reading a letter, an extract of which I take the liberty of inclosing: — "Well, what's that to me?" was the answer; "what have I to do with his blunders? Why did not he give the notices?" In reply, half a word from you, Sir, would be enough to satisfy him whether there was any blunder in the case, and whether, should I be even fortunate enough hereafter to find your sanction, and that of the Attorney-General, given to the bill, it would even then be either availing, or so much as endurable, that I, *ego homuncio*, should take upon me to do any such act. You will tell him, I believe, Sir, that if these notices should ever come to have been given, and given with any effect, they will have been given by the solicitor to the Treasury; and you could tell Mr. Pitt (as well as if the scene had been past, and yourself present at it,) what sort of reception the gentleman who at present fills that office would have given me, had I so much as proposed to him the giving of any such notices, before the signatures of either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General had been given to the bill.

The same sort of misconception seems to have got possession of one if not both the secretaries to the Treasury, though by no means adverse either to the

business itself, or to the party so unfortunately concerned in it. All this while it is by the Treasury (you could tell them, Sir,) that by the act of 1794, the land is to be fixed upon; the purchase-money paid; the feoffee or feoffees appointed for the holding of the land when purchased; and a person or persons (not myself by name, but any body they please) contracted with, if they can find anybody to contract with them, to erect a Penitentiary House, and the same or any other persons to manage it when erected. As for me, not having been nominated for any of those purposes by the Treasury, any more than in and by the act, I have neither power nor authority to take a single step; it is by the Treasury that everything must be done, if anything ever is done. Yet it was but t'other day, that, on my making representations to this effect, entreating support, and protesting my own nullity, the answer I met with was a smile of unbelief, as much as to say, *So you think fit to tell us; but we know better things.*

This, however, being the notion, as often as any, the slightest, act of co-operation comes to be performed by the Treasury, every such act (though by subsequent desertions, or delays, or refusals, or retractions, rendered of no use) is looked upon as a fresh favour, an assistance which I had no claim to, and scarce a title to expect. Yet, as to that point, the case (not to mince the matter) is briefly this. Mr. Pitt, after engaging me to lay out my money, to the amount of above 10,000*l.*, by the promise of a contract, the terms of which, after being corrected and approved by the Attorney and Solicitor-General, were at length engrossed by the soli-

citor to the Treasury, and returned to the Treasury for signature; the engagement recognised and confirmed by money reciprocally advanced, as per account delivered in the House of Commons, and granted by the Committee of Finance; applies and obtains from parliament the powers which were to enable him to fulfil his part of the engagement. When he had got the powers, he *delays*, and *consents*, and at last *refuses* (he knows why, and I know why) to execute them; when he has procured the spot I had stipulated for (the spot chosen originally by the twelve judges), to be chosen again by Parliament, he refuses to take it. To this very moment it remains as much in his power to take it as ever it was. If, after repulse upon repulse, I am thus long upon the hunt after fresh land, it is only because I cannot get the promised land; yet, because he refuses, and without assigning a reason, to make use of the powers he has obtained, it is for me — the helpless, deceived, and deserted individual, whom he has ruined by the refusal, — it is for me, who (you can tell him, Sir,) have no power to do any thing, — it is for me, forsooth, to procure him fresh powers!

The committee — unaccustomed to see acts of parliament converted by ministers into instruments of deceit, and individuals amerced for imputed ingenuity, more heavily than *Magna Charta* will allow of for a crime — the committee have begun already to talk, and even to write to the Treasury, about *indemnification*, — indemnification at the charge of the public; indemnification even for what is past, without prejudice to satisfaction in regard to the future. Upon my applying, as by the

inclosed, for a sort of indemnification,—which, miserable as it is, is the only sort of indemnification, *not chargeable to the public*, that could be given me,—the answer was what you have seen. Had Mr. Pitt possessed the advantage of knowing your sentiments on the subject, the answer would (I cannot help thinking) have been a different one; and even now, Sir, he might be willing to learn from you what he might ill bear to be taught by a committee.

When government, in its dealings with its listed servants, has been seven quarters in arrear, (the longest known, I believe,) what a sensation it has made! The arrear, in my case, is already eighteen quarters: the debt, in that case, is for *work and labour* merely; in mine, besides the *work and labour*, is included 10,000*l.* laid out and expended in hard money. Can it be just that government, even in its utmost difficulties, should seek relief in a fearful bankruptcy, bearing exclusively upon a single victim?

Were you ever to mention the matter to Mr. Wilberforce, you would see the impression which the usage I have experienced from the Right Honourable Minister has made on one of the warmest and most intimate of his friends; and after what he has heard from that quarter, a word or two on the question *whether it be* a *private* or a *public business*, might not be altogether thrown away, even in his instance.

Your candour, Sir, will know how to make allowance for any of those asperities of *expression*, which are but too natural a fruit of so many years of sufferance; but if in substance you find me wrong, and will have the

goodness to give me an intimation to that effect, it would eventually save your Right Honourable Friend from some trouble, and I need scarce tell you (for you may infer from more than one experience) with how respectful a resignation it would be received.

I have the honour to be,

With all respect, Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

JEREMY BENTHAM.

To MR. SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

Broomfield, August 2. 1798.

Some friends of ours, Mr. and Mrs. Dikes, are travelling into the West. They are excellent people. He is the person who built the new church at Hull about seven years ago, which remains a blessed fruit of the late Dr. Clarke's wish to do good in spite of many obstacles. I told them they must see all your operations. I beseech you receive them as brethren and sisters, and consider them as friends. By their surveying your different settlements, and seeing with their own eyes the effects of what you will relate to them of your modes of proceeding, you will not only produce in *them* a degree of heat, which, according to Sir Isaac Newton's comet calculation, will be twenty years in cooling, but very likely they may warm others, and set on foot something of the same

kind in our *North Coŭntrēe.* To Miss Patty More I also commend them, and to all your good sisters, in the warmest manner.

By the way, I ought to mention to you, that in case of my death, I have taken care that your Somersetshire operations should not lose thereby what I should allot to them, if it should please God to spare me. I thought it might be a satisfaction to you to know this, and an encouragement to you to venture boldly. But, I beseech you, spare yourself as much as is consistent with your carrying on your operations. While God continues so to bless your labours, I dare not desire you to abstain from them, though I see you wearing yourself out: but, indeed, you ought to economise in the expenditure of your strength, and be rather, for that end, prodigal of money.

Farewell. Kind remembrances. Our government are sanguine in their hopes of Nelson's overtaking Buonaparte — humanly speaking there seems no doubt of it. By the way, it may be a satisfaction to all your kind and earnest hearts, to be assured by me that the reports so artfully circulated concerning Mr. Pitt are altogether false. I spent a day with him, *tête-à-tête*, about a fortnight ago, and he is better than he has been all the last winter. Farewell.

Believe me ever yours, affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO JOHN SMYTH, ESQ.

Broomfield, August 3. 1798.

My dear Smyth,

I have not forgotten the wish you so kindly expressed that I would send you word, after a time, how all went on in my nursery. I thank God, my dear Mrs. W. and our infant have both gone on uniformly well. Indeed I have the utmost cause for gratitude. If I look around me all over the earth, and compare my lot with that of ninety-nine hundredths of its inhabitants, I am compelled to lift up my eyes with wonder, and I am sure with humiliation. And again if I not only take my survey far and wide among all those who are now alive, but if I extend it backward, and proceed, one by one, through all the successive periods of the world, and all the various empires, there has scarcely been one from which I do not instinctively recoil, taking refuge in the age and the country in which I am placed, as those in which, above all others whatever, one would most desire, if one could choose, to fix one's existence. Yet I am sensible we may live to see sad scenes; but, I bless God, I have a firm persuasion that He will endow us with fortitude equal to our trials, or He will spare us any encounters which might be beyond our strength. Oh, my dear friend! how little, how for a moment, will all those concerns appear one day, about which we are apt to be so deeply interested! Tell me honestly, do you not find them diminish in bulk as you recede from London, or rather

after a little residence in the country, and ready to resume their old dimensions after a few weeks of London soiling? Believe me, the former is their true size.

Will you be in these parts before the meeting of Parliament? For your own sake I cannot wish it, but I should be really glad of any opportunity of spending three or four quiet days with you; and this year there is little chance of our getting into Yorkshire. I hope Lady Georgiana and all your family are well; and, often thinking of you, and always, when I do, with friendly regard,

I remain, my dear S.,
Yours, affectionately and sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE.

I began this last night, but was called off, and have been so much pressed this morning as to be scarcely able to finish it.

REV. THOMAS GISBORNE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Buxton, August 22. 1798.

My dear W.,

I have made an Irish acquaintance here, with whom I am considerably pleased: I mean Dr. Browne, the M. P. for Dublin University. He has much information, and apparently much candour; and the character which I understand Johnson to have heretofore given of him to Garrick ("David, here is a young

Irishman, who is at present modest,") still belongs to him. He is gone for London, where he is to arrive on Saturday, meaning to stay there three weeks. As I think it not unlikely that you may wish for an opportunity of *squeezing* him, I will add that he lodges at No. 12. Charles Street, St. James's Square. A person in your situation can of course introduce himself, or easily procure introduction, to any one. But if the use of my name will in this case save you any trouble, I saw enough of Dr. B., though only at the end of his stay here, to justify me in desiring you to avail yourself of it as you may think fit.

With respect to an union with this country, he said he had never considered the subject with the attention, or half the attention, which a matter of such moment would demand. We talked over one or two detached points; and he stated what he thought of the Irish parliament very fairly. I believe that you are a decided friend to an union, if attainable. I, who evidently must know much of the business, must confess that I have my doubts. It strikes me that an union would greatly aggravate all the evils of *Absenteeism*. What is it that now retains in Ireland such of their noblemen and gentlemen of fortune as stay there? The circumstance of their having an independent legislature of their own stationed in Dublin. Remove that attraction to London, and most of them, I think, will follow. I also think so much better of our Houses of Parliament than I do of the Irish, that I apprehend they would suffer materially from that infusion of Irish members, which must result from a national coalition. I am no

drinker of port; but I conceive that a person habituated to his daily pint of that liquor, even though not of the very best quality, would have no great satisfaction in learning that for the future it was to be mixed with a third or a fourth of Hiera Picra. It is possible that these and other disadvantages attending an union, might be more than counterbalanced by benefits. But that is a point concerning which I at present feel nothing like assurance. Dr. B. told me some curious anecdotes, coming under his own eyes, of individual Irish members of parliament.

Will you tell Babington that Mr. S. has got a letter from the present sheriff of Leicestershire, (a London banker, I understand,) which represents the Land-Tax Redemption as a scheme of ministry to lay the burden of the war on landowners; that a new land-tax is to take place, and *that* to be redeemed; then another, to be redeemed in like manner; and so *ad infinitum*, till gentlemen have paid the fee simple of their estates. Mr. S. is in no small pother about this; and conceives his authority to speak the sentiments of the London bankers, &c. Many thanks for your wishes to see us, though we cannot profit by them. We are, providentially, well, and very glad that you all are.

Yours, very affectionately,

T. G.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO REV. THOMAS GISBORNE.

Near Bath, December 6. 1799.

My dear Gisborne,

Venn desires me to say that the mission plan has been misunderstood. It was not intended that the catechists should ordinarily baptize, but only in cases of necessity. This seems to take away the force of the Bishop of Durham's objection to the use made of Hooker's authority. Surely there might be some special appointment or designation for persons intended for teaching barbarous heathen. For the service requires qualifications very different from that of a minister in an enlightened, polished country, like this, where the truths of Christianity are already known and professed. Do meditate on this; and if you approve, state your opinion to the Bishop of Durham; to whom also be kind enough, without delay, to represent the answer we make to his objection founded on a misconception of our meaning; *vide* rule 18. page 21., where it is expressly declared that catechists are not to administer baptism, except in cases of necessity.

I have not had time yet to read your new publication; but on casting my eye over the plan, which I like much, my attention was drawn to the chapter on Christian doctrines — and there I wish you had been more clear and particular in stating the necessity of repentance and faith. The terms "loving Christ," "entire submission to Him and His laws," "giving ourselves to Him," &c.,

are, to any one who is thoroughly conversant with the subject, pregnant with meaning and quite satisfactory; also, the texts which go before, abound in particular instruction; but consider how very ignorant the bulk of the higher orders are on this subject. I am always fearful of a sort of practical antinomianism I have often witnessed . . . persons of dissipation, &c. appropriating to themselves the promises of the gospel, without even aiming at that grateful humility and contrition, which, mixed with joy, should be the prevailing temper of the true Christian. I must stop. Farewell.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's College, Saturday, December 21. 1799.

My dear Friend,

In the compass of a letter I cannot explain to you in how great darkness and temptation my mind has been of late, and, indeed, continues yet, to a degree. I can only say, at present, "all my bodily complaints are nothing to it." I could rejoice under them if they were double, treble, many-fold, if it did not please God to hide His countenance. I cannot explain myself so as to be understood. You would not, could not, believe my narrative of what passes, and has passed, night and day, and even in dreams. I have yet been kept, blessed be God, from despair; but I really know not where it will

end. If ever it please God that I fairly get out of my present harassed state of mind, a ray of hope sometimes darts "that I may be happier than ever I have yet been." I call it a ray of hope, but in reality it rather resembles a flash of lightning in a dreadfully dark and tempestuous night, than the cheering rays of the sun. Flashes of lightning, at the same time that they dismay and terrify one, partly on their own account, and partly on account of the deep and dangerous ditches which they discover for a moment—these same flashes, I say, for the same moment, show that there is a good turnpike road between the ditches, and enable the traveller also to avoid the danger, and to proceed on his journey for a time, though under great apprehensions, till another flash comes. This image is taken from what really happened to me in Lincolnshire (that dreadful summer, some few years ago,) in the night-time. The stage coachman declared that it was as dark as pitch, and stopped, absolutely, very often, till a dreadful flash of lightning showed him where he was. There was a West Indian in the coach at the same time, who frightened every body by his horrid imprecations against the coachman.

There are certain parts of Holy Writ which I endeavour *to grasp* with all my might, and this constantly, and so it has hitherto pleased God to support me; but I am sorry to say that my grasp is often a grasp of fear, and agitation, and necessity, rather than of willingness and holy confidence. I see that there is nothing else to be done; but I do not honour God by submitting cordially to His way of salvation. This is the great point

that I have long been aiming at, and I make nothing of it; and yet I know and am sure, that without this all the rest is sounding brass. My grasp, however, of which I now speak, is strong, and I have had a little relief within the few days past. I do not know whether I make myself understood. I mean this. To submit to the condemning power of the holy law of God is a hard matter, a very hard matter indeed, to do this thoroughly: my understanding has shown me, for many years, that this was the touchstone of a sound conversion; and I have been busy enough in noting the defect of it in others; but as to myself, if I have got on at all in this respect, it is very lately indeed. The heart is sadly deceitful here; for, with Christ's salvation before one's eye, one may easily fancy that God is just and equitable in condemning sinners; when, if you put the case only for a moment to your own heart seriously, as a thing likely to happen, the heart *will* rise against such a dispensation; perhaps, indeed, with a smothered sort of opposition and dislike, but which is very steady and determined. Nothing less than the Holy Ghost himself can cure this, by showing us the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. A sinking man lays hold of a rope thrown out to him, and grasps it firmly. I bless God, I never leave hold of the rope, and I trust I shall be found grasping it fast to the last. Neither have I the slightest fear of the rope breaking; but if I do not feel and acknowledge thoroughly that the whole is a downright act of mercy, in every possible sense that you can twist the matter, I may still be suffered to sink for ever. I see clearly enough the way in which that dreadful

event happens to many of those who are lost. Experience concurs to show the wisdom of the Scriptures, and the consistency of the Gospel scheme. I have a deal to say to you, and I can hardly keep it from breaking forth, but I must stop.

* * * * * * *

Your last letter, though short, is truly affectionate, and lays hold of me (in several tender places) very closely. The quotation from Milton, which you kindly wish me to advert to, is a favourite passage, and has been so with me for many years. The sentiment is sound and pious I think, but, like every thing else, is liable to abuse by being carried too far. It is true God will never blame us for want of exertion, where power is denied, but I suppose the will is as much shown in feeble efforts as in strong ones, provided those feeble efforts be but proportionate to the faculties; it was so in the widow's mite, and doubtless it is the same in other things.

I purposely said what I had to say on other subjects, unmixed with the consideration *of your own health*, though that has been running in my head, I think I may say with truth, during every single line and almost every word that I have written. Wonderful beings we are! I hope I need not repeat to you how much I am always concerned when any thing unpleasant happens to you; a great deal more, I believe, than you yourself are, or than any body can conceive who does not know what it is to be hampered with such a nervous, irritable, and (if you will allow me) affectionate sort of composition as I am hampered with. I have felt in

this way *towards you now for many years*, and it is not likely that my anxieties on your account, and apprehensions of any mischief should be less, because God has taken to himself what was very near and dear to me, and left me a sort of insulated being, and very, very — disconsolate is a weak word — nearly heart-broken is far nearer the truth. Indeed, my dear friend, my heart is so full, I can hardly get to the subject I am driving at; and I will, God willing, finish to-morrow.

Yours most affectionately,

J. MILNER.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Near Bath, Tuesday Night, December 24, 1799.

My dear Muncaster,

A thousand thanks for your friendly mediation; not but that I knew you would be abundantly repaid for a hundred times as much trouble, by the pleasure you feel in an office so congenial to your nature. Your extract from our old friend's letter gives me real pleasure and relief. It is truly painful to a mind of any sensibility to think of being separated from any to whom it was once bound by the ties of mutual regard. Poor fellow! —You remember, I am sure, our conversation concerning him one day, as we descended from your Park after feasting our eyes and regaling our lungs from the

mountain eminence. It makes my heart ache to think of those same topics. To Wyvill and Cecil I would address the language of Job, miserable comforters are you all—the former you don't know. He is a singular character; of perfect integrity, but apt to ruminate till his own ideas are become a part of himself, and like some distempered brain, surrounded with phantoms of terror of its own creation. Not but that I think our prospects must be gloomy to every considerate mind; and that feature, which I confess saddens me more than all the rest, is the unconquerable dissipation and volatility of our countrymen. It deserves no better name than practical Atheism.

Every good wish attends you and yours from me and mine, my dear Muncaster, at this season of congratulating.

Believe me,
Yours ever affectionately,
W. WILBERFORCE.

REV. SAMUEL MARSDEN (Chaplain in New South Wales) TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Parramatta, 1799.

Honoured Sir,

Though I have nothing of any importance to mention, I could not let this opportunity pass without giving you a line. I have the pleasure to inform you that, after repeated application and much difficulty, a church

is begun at Parramatta, which I hope, in time, to see completed. There is no immediate prospect of my colleague having one built at Sydney; too many difficulties are thrown in his way, which he has neither strength nor spirits to encounter. The governor himself has many embarrassments to contend with: his situation has been, and continues to be, as distressing as either Mr. Johnson's or mine. The evils under which the colony groans have increased to such a magnitude that Government alone has power to redress them. Monopolies, and the price of every article of consumption, have gradually increased to this very day, in proportion as the trading officers have advanced towards independency. * * * *

It is truly a painful reflection that the morals of the lower ranks of inhabitants should be sacrificed to the avarice of a few individuals, as well as the temporal prosperity of the colony, which is the case at present. The soil and climate are as good, and, perhaps, superior to any in the known world. Nothing can exceed the prospect we have of a most plentiful crop of wheat this season. From the richness of the soil, and the salubrity of the climate, we might be the happiest people on earth, while avarice and extortion render us miserable. What must our situation be, sir, when the governor's salary is but a small sum compared with what individuals make by private trade.

We have long been anxiously expecting the arrival of Governor King, hoping some instructions for the better regulation of the affairs of the settlement will be sent out by him. We have got no public schools yet of any

consequence: I have made several attempts to have one built at Parramatta, but have not yet succeeded. The only prospect of a minister's usefulness is in the rising generation; and before any good can be effected amongst them, a school must be built for their accommodation. The children are very numerous, but are brought up at present in all the vices of their abandoned parents; and many children are totally relinquished, and cast upon Government for support and protection. These children, as well as the orphans, live with settlers, or others who will receive them, and Government furnishes them with provisions. The young girls, in particular, are all likely to be ruined for want of proper persons to superintend their education. Some measures would probably be adopted for the relief of these poor children if the officers thought their present situation permanent. They all, one after another, expect to leave the colony, and on that account are not interested in its future prosperity. If I once get my church completed, I purpose turning my whole attention to the erection of a school, and then I shall hope to see some fruit of my labours.

We begin now to be supplied occasionally with mutton. Sheep thrive exceeding well: the fleeces improve in quality yearly. In the course of time we shall be able to manufacture cloth. The number of ewes at present in the settlement is near 4000. This year we have had several whalers fishing on our coast; some of them have been very successful, and will soon return to England with their cargo of oil. There is every reason to believe that a whale fishery will be established at Port Jackson; should this be the case, the whalers may con-

tribute to lower the prices of English goods in the colony.

Mrs. M—— and my little family are all very well. My native boy, whom I have had now more than four years, improves much; he is become useful in the family; can speak the English language very well; and has begun to read. Should you be able, sir, at any time to send out a schoolmaster and mistress well qualified for such an office, they will be very acceptable, and their situation will be made comfortable here: none but married persons should come out in that capacity. The above I write in haste. I will give you a more particular account by the next conveyance.

I am,

Honoured Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL MARSDEN.

LORD ELDON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted by Mr. W.,— "Sir John Scott, thanking me for congratulations."]

1799.

My dear Friend,

I have often addressed myself to the performance of my duty to you, in vain: I am so agitated by the kindness which has been expressed to me, and the apprehension that I may prove unworthy to retain the good opinion which has, I have reason to believe, hitherto supported me, that I cannot subdue myself to composure.

My only consolation is that I have most largely and liberally experienced that indulgence, which overrates what is a mere effort of industry, when it gives credit for upright intentions. These are within my power: at least my humble hope is that they may be confirmed and established.

Continue to me your friendship and regard. I have long valued it: I value it more and more, as I feel I want the support I shall derive from it.

Yours ever faithfully,

ELDON.*

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO WM. HEY, ESQ. LEEDS.

Newbury, January 21, 1800.

My dear Sir,

* * * * *

In the course of the last summer I had more frequent attacks of illness than in any former recess from parliament. I went down to Bath about the middle of September last, and have been drinking the waters occasionally ever since, and leading, on the whole, an extremely regular life, and a more quiet and domestic one than I have enjoyed for many years. I am now returning to town better, I trust, but in what degree I am doubtful. It seems as if while I continue to go on regularly as to hours, diet, &c., avoiding all

* Lord Eldon was created a peer on the 18th July, 1799.

fatigue, I might be equal to the discharge of a good deal of business; but any thing which is at all out of my system disorders me, and reminds me what a poor shattered creature I am. Yet let me speak of the goodness of God in this particular. Twelve years and a half ago I was on my way to Bath, in this very inn, far worse than I now am, and, humanly speaking, less likely to live, and to be equal to business. I cannot look back upon this long period without many painful recollections, and a humiliating sense of the unworthy return I have made for all the unnumbered instances I have experienced of the Divine long-suffering and loving kindness. O that I might be enabled to spend the remainder of my days more to the glory of God and the welfare of my fellow creatures! I have entered into a little detail respecting my health, because I was sure you would be interested on this subject. * * *

Have you had an account of what has passed respecting this said mission society? It is rather indicative of the temper of the Bench of Bishops, and in that view very important. If you have not received it, I will endeavour to find a vacant half hour for scribbling it to you. My fellow travellers have been chatting around me while I have been writing, and, in spite of myself, drawing me into conversation. I am now travelling in a patriarchal way, with a wife and two children in my train, and am carrying off to town a daughter of Mr. Preston, of Flasby, a young woman of fifteen or sixteen, who is at school in town, and seems very piously disposed. Piety in youth is a lovely spectacle. While I think of it let me ask you,

does the "Antijacobin Review" meet with many readers in your country? It is a most mischievous publication, which, by dint of assuming a tone of the highest loyalty and attachment to our establishment in church and state, secures a prejudice in its favour, and has declared war against what I think the most respectable and most useful of all orders of men — the serious clergy of the Church of England. It has of late openly opposed and vilified the abolitionists; it has condemned as puritanical the wish expressed by the society for bettering the condition of the poor, that the number of alehouses might be lessened to the proportion really wanted for travellers. But its opposition to the evangelical clergy is carried on in so very venomous a way, and with so much impudence, and so little regard to truth, that the mischief it does is very great indeed. It accuses them in the plainest terms, and sometimes by name, as being disaffected both to church and state.

Believe me, my dear Sir, with every wish for your temporal and eternal happiness,

Yours ever most truly,

W. WILBERFORCE.

What a scene does this world exhibit to any spiritual being, who from his elevation sees the globe go once round. It should quicken our efforts to secure for ourselves a refuge there, where sorrow and sighing and guilt and pain shall flee away, and the reign of love be complete and eternal!

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's College, January 21, 1800.

* * * * *

Had I to have answered his note*, I would have been a deal more civil in words, but equally firm in substance. They were, I think, perfectly right in not letting the king answer — but why could they not have said, — "We are glad to hear of the very name of peace in any way or in any form; but what signifies asking us whether the war is to be eternal? You propose nothing; we have formerly proposed, and have been sent back with contempt. You show no disposition to peace but in talk; and at the very time you tell your armies you are going to invade us," &c. &c. It seems to me, if Buonaparte was meditating some violent measure, either on us or the allies, or both, and wished to influence France, and make the people contribute freely, and the soldiers fight in earnest, that we, by such an answer, should concur with him most effectually. — In a word, conceive him at the head of his troops with our answer in his hands, and commenting upon it. I cannot think that any thing would have been lost by showing a disposition TO HEAR. I would have stated the objection arising from the instability of their government, but still I would not have considered it as an effectual bar to hearing what they have to say. It is ridiculous to talk of Buonaparte's government being a government

* Buonaparte's letter to George III.

only of a day or two — be it so. Suppose he offers to quit Belgium, and to put you and the allies in possession of every thing they could wish, would you refuse the advantage because he is an upstart?

There is no probability of any such thing, I believe, in the main; yet I declare I should be surprised at nothing; and I would never have exasperated him, nor shut his mouth — hear him, I say, hear him; but don't give up a particle to him. I suppose it will be said he wanted his authority to be recognised by us: it may be so; but possibly he wanted it to be rejected. I don't know enough of the interior of France, or of his particular views, to say well what he wants; but I am sure there would have been great use in letting him go on, and in seeing what he is driving at. There would have been no harm in expressing the utmost doubts as to his stability, nor would I have expressed those doubts at all in friendly terms; but there is a deal of difference between friendship and civility. Nothing like a wish for his stability should have come from me; and for similar reasons I would have said nothing about the old line of princes. Alas! alas! only think in a very short time you may be on your knees to this very B., and begging him to admit you to negotiate. I hope our people will not ride the great horse, it is such a horrid measure. Not that on the whole I expect a successful negotiation; but I wish the argument to be on our side when it is broken off; and that we may say with truth, as the Americans did, "We have exhausted the last drop of the cup of reconciliation!" Those that give our ministers credit for more discretion and fore-

sight than I do, may view this matter in a different light. They may suppose that they know that nine parts out of ten of France are ripe for restoring monarchy; and that the allies, the three great powers, have solemnly coalesced and sworn to set all matters on their old footing; and, lastly, that they will keep their vows. If all this be absolutely foreknown, I grant it will make some difference in the reasoning; but really not a great deal even then: still I would have given him civil words, however I had thought it necessary to guard against strengthening his authority.

Every body that I see thinks with me, except one Whitmore, who has long been violent for the Duke of Portland, Wyndham, &c.

REV. SAMUEL MARSDEN TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Parramatta, February 6, 1800.

Honoured Sir,

Though I have already troubled you with a long letter upon the affairs of this colony, yet I think it my duty to mention another subject of great moment to the happiness and prosperity of these parts of his Majesty's dominions,— which is, the state of the poor orphans. No provision is made by Government for their education, nor yet by individuals. It may easily be made to appear that a proper establishment for these children would eventually be a great saving to the nation, in addition to the religious, civil, and moral advantages which would

accrue to the colony. There are, I believe, upwards of eight hundred children in the settlement. Some of these children were born on the passage to this country; others, after the arrival of their parents. Their fathers, in general, are either sailors, soldiers, or prisoners; the former quit the country with the respective ships they belong to, and the two latter have seldom either inclination or ability to provide for their children. In addition to these, some are orphans in the strictest sense; others relinquished by their unnatural mothers.

From principles of humanity it has been an established custom to issue a full ration of provision from the public store to every orphan or destitute child, as an inducement for settlers and others to take them under their protection. Many, purely for the sake of the provisions, take these children, who would otherwise perish for want of care; but were there a public building, proper for the reception of these orphans, where their food could be dressed together, one third of the provisions would be quite sufficient for their support. It should be remembered, that the ration issued to the orphans is not given merely for the support of the children, but as a compensation to those who have the care of them; hence the above reduction could easily be made without any loss to the orphans, provided an establishment was made for them.

I have taken the liberty to lay this statement before you for your information. I cannot but hope, if Government were acquainted with the real state of the children in this country, — what a burden they are to the state, while at the same time their education and morals are

totally neglected, — they would be induced to adopt some means to lessen the expenses on one hand, and on the other, to have the children brought up in the principles of morality and industry. If some private or public establishment is not instituted for them, they will be more abandoned than their unfortunate parents: at present they are brought up in idleness, and uncleanness, and robbery, and scattered up and down in every part of the settlement.

I have had frequent conversations with Governor Hunter upon this subject. His Excellency is of opinion, if some person who had local knowledge of their situation was at home to represent their state (as this cannot be sufficiently done by letter), some redress might be obtained for them. Though I am very sick of the iniquity of this country, and anxious to enjoy again some little peace and quiet of mind, yet were I in England, and could see any prospect of a proper institution for the poor children, I should willingly embark again for New South Wales; in that case I should have some hope of doing a little good to the rising generation. Mr. Cover, one of the missionaries sent out to Otaheite, is the bearer of this: he has resided in this settlement long enough to see the state of the clergymen and of the children, and can furnish you with any further information upon this subject, if it should be in your power to support, or in any way promote so humane an undertaking as an orphan school.

I am,
Honoured Sir,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
SAMUEL MARSDEN.

LORD ELDON TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

My dear Sir,

With the reluctance which has always stuck by me in the execution of my duty as a member of parliament, I have been down to the House of Lords to say a word on the Habeas* Corpus Suspension bill. I persuade myself that you give me credit for not being ungrateful to you for what you said upon that subject, in the Commons, as far as it had relation to me; and whilst I have been indulging what I have long panted for — the *aliquod temporis spatium inter negotia vitæ et finem*, &c., believe me I have felt deeply, gratefully, and cordially, the kind things you said of me in the House of Commons.

I shall feel a glow of satisfaction in the recollection that you thought me worthy of such notice. I intended to call upon you to thank you; but in my little obscure retreat — my hole in the wall in Westminster Hall and at Guildhall — I have spent an immense portion of time for many weeks: I can't delay my acknowledgments, and I am afraid I must add that, counsel going the circuits, and having a great load of business, I fear I shall be in court at Guildhall till such an hour on Saturday night, as to make me quite without hope that I can wait upon you on that day. Give my best respects to Dr. Milner, and tell him that I shall buy his print, though,

* February 27, 1800.

as an old-fashioned Oxonian, I should have liked it better if he had had a band about his neck.

Yours faithfully and sincerely,

ELDON.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

London, June 21, 1800.

My dear Friend,

I hope this will find you and your fellow-traveller safely arrived at Cowslip Green. I meant to write largely, but am so pressed for time that I can only hint at what was to have been my subject — 'Tis for Miss Patty. — Miss P. of Westmoreland should be urged to attempt some operations in your way. You should undertake to set her a going, and afford a distant hope of looking in upon her proceedings, if it should please God — I will assist cheerfully — I am debtor to that country, having lived there and left it as barren as I found it. I think of this with pain. Much might be done. Kindest remembrances and wishes.

In haste, —

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO J. HARE NAYLOR, ESQ.

Broomfield, July 5, 1800.

My time, always too little for my occupations, is now extremely frittered away by daily journeys to and from London. The consequence is a boxful of unanswered letters, which is at this moment reproaching me. The words of Madame de Brissac are very striking. It is the particular in Buonaparte's character, which I confess has always most impressed me with a sense of his possessing extraordinary powers, that he wins over people of acknowledged eminence in various lines, attaches them to his cause, and renders them subservient to his purposes. This power of gravitation, if I may so call it, is absolutely necessary where any one is to be the centre of a system. Without it, all would be confusion. But it is the infallible proof of a great man; and I will frankly confess to you, that it surprises me more in Buonaparte, because he has on some occasions (in Egypt especially) appeared to act in a manner unbecoming not only a good man, but a great one.

But I have not time to express the sentiments which crowd upon my pen. I must quit you and go to far less interesting topics. Let me, however, remind you before I conclude, that I, for one, never defended Lord Grenville's answer, though (with more hesitation and doubt than I believe I ever before experienced in any such instance) I was convinced, on the whole, that it had been right to reject Buonaparte's offer. Government have yet received no accounts from Vienna since the

tidings of the Grand Consul's success reached that capital. I expect to hear the Austrians have made peace, or at least agreed to treat. Whether they will have had the honesty to include us in the negotiation time will show. But however this be, Buonaparte's victories must lead, I conceive, to a speedy termination of the war; and though the Searcher of Hearts knows with how much earnestness I long for that event, I yet look forward with no little solicitude to the future comparative state of France and England after any peace, which we have a right to except in the present circumstances of both parties.

THOMAS BOWDLER, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted — Bowdler, very pleasing and pious.]

St. Boniface, July 6, 1800.

I thank you, my good friend, for yours. I am unacquainted with Witherspoon's writings; but my sentiments coincide with yours in so many things, and differ in so few, that I shall with great pleasure and attention read any book that you recommend. I will, however, confess to you, that when I read serious books, I do it rather for the improvement of my defective practice, than the improvement of my principles.

I was educated by parents who professed (and acted agreeably to their profession) what are sometimes called the strictest high church principles of the Church of

England. I believe they would have followed Ridley to the stake rather than communicate with Cardinal Beatoun or John Knox; and in another period would have followed Sancroft first to the Tower, to avoid complying with the unlawful commands of a popish king; and afterwards have followed the same Sancroft into retirement, to avoid complying with those who deposed that very king. I was from a child brought up in those principles. My judgment has never varied from them, and I believe it never will, for I have no doubts as to any of the fundamental points in Christianity. All my opinions are fixed, and I very, very much wish that my performance of its duties were equally steady; but I hope that my deviations from what is right will be pardoned, not on account of what I may have done which is right, but on account of the atonement made for my offences by the death of my Redeemer. I also hope that, by the gracious assistance of Heaven, bestowed on my humble endeavours to improve my conduct, I may employ the remainder of my life better than I have done the former part of it, and may, for the sake of the same blessed Redeemer, be hereafter permitted to enjoy a degree of happiness, the permanency of which will make the events of this short-lived existence appear of little importance. Forgive my intruding this short confession of faith, and send me the book you mentioned.

Believe me to be your very sincere friend,

THOS. BOWDLER.

JEREMY BENTHAM, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Q. S. P. Friday, July 18, 1800.
5 o'clock.

My dear Sir,

Between 2d and 10th June, 1800: — Memorial, containing the very first communication, in any shape, on the subject of rise of prices. Audience refused. "Memorial" ordered, with refusal to hear, or to say upon what points.

Was not this an audience? say you. Yes, an audience in a passage; Mr. Long's long legs straining themselves to escape.

This is what Mr. Long gave you by way of answer to a question about cause of delay, — your question embracing (I suppose, but you alone know) the delay from July, 1799, to July, 1800. I told you it was a hasty answer, given under the pressure of your question, for want of a more satisfactory one. Was my construction uncandid? Find me one that is less so, and I will adopt it.

J. BENTHAM.

P. S. — Why mention this? Only that you may not turn aside from me, like the Levite, under the notion of my having cut my own throat by starting rise of prices.

One word more now I have pen in hand.

You think I ought not to do it so cheap: Morton Pitt is sure I cannot, and shall be ruined.

Mr. Rose, *per contra*, — the last time I had the honour of attending him, viz., about this time twelvemonth.

Ipsissima verba.

"So, Mr. Bentham, I find you have taken very good care of yourself; special care, indeed! I thought you had dealt more liberally with the public!" So far, Mr. Rose. Do you think I flew at him as I do at you? I know better things.

Supposition whimsical enough, but not unprecedented: — Panopticon lost by four votes; two, because terms not high enough; the project, therefore, either knavish, or foolish, and at any rate, impracticable; two, because terms so high; project, rapacious and extortionate.

The article binding me to pay forfeit for post-liberation felonies would lose me many a vote. It has hurt me even with Abbot; it had hurt me with Nepean; not to mention persons too high to be named.

I satisfied him in three words out of twice as many reasons that I could have found. The loss could never befal me but in company with a much greater gain.

Either the man is hanged, and then his superannuation annuity is saved to me; or he comes back to me again, and then I squeeze it out of him with interest.

Nepean was satisfied; but the *Dii majorum gentium*, whoever they are, are above the reach of satisfaction.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MR. ASHLEY.

Bognor, September 4, 1800.

Dear Mr. Ashley,

* * * There is nothing in which I would recommend you to be more strictly resolute than in

keeping the Sabbath holy; and by this I mean, not only abstaining on that day from all unbecoming sports and common business, but from consuming time in frivolous conversation, paying or receiving visits, which, among relations, often leads to a sad waste of this precious day. These are practices, which have their source in an inadequate sense of the value of a season in which we may lawfully neglect our ordinary occupations, and, consequently, addict ourselves, without interruption, to religious offices. Self-examination, and much private prayer, should never be omitted on this day; and I have found it very useful to walk out and admire the beauties of Nature, and raise my mind to a consideration of the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God. I can truly declare to you, that to me the institution of the Sabbath has been invaluable. I need not suggest, likewise, the duty of searching into our hearts on that day, examining ourselves as to our love of God, and of Christ, and purging out all malice and ill-will towards any one who may have offended us, trying likewise, where opportunity offers, to make peace. In all, we should ever associate the idea of our Blessed Master, and endeavour to render Him as much as possible present to our minds. I have learned by experience that if our acquaintance see that we are resolute in our determination to keep the Lord's day holy, they will, after a while at least, leave us to ourselves, and even respect us more for adhering to the dictates of our own principles.

I have said a great deal on this subject: it is because I am deeply impressed with its importance; and you must expect to be exposed to temptations to break

through the strict line which, I dare say, you wish to lay down for yourself.

I have a good deal of work on my hands just now; I will, therefore, occupy you no longer than to assure you that I am, with every good wish,

Your sincere friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO CHARLES GRANT, ESQ.

Bognor, September 27, 1800.

My dear Friend,

I cannot leave it to any other pen to inform you that it has pleased God to visit me with one of the severest of human trials, in the dangerous illness of my dearest wife. The final issue is not likely to be very speedy, but from the violence of the symptoms, and especially of the delirium (this is very affecting), at the outset of the disorder, I am very frankly and properly told, that there is every reason for apprehension, though not for despair. Blessed, a thousand times blessed be God, that I humbly trust I may believe death would be her unspeakable gain. I am sure we shall have all your prayers; your young folks will think and feel for us. Let them here see the uncertainty of all human enjoyments, and learn to fix their attachments on an unchangeable and immortal basis; then, though flesh

and heart may fail, God will be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever.

With every sentiment of cordial attachment,

I am,

Ever affectionately and sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

I have much to write. Mr. Venn, I am sure, will not misconstrue my desiring you to tell him and Mrs. V. these affecting tidings instead of my writing to him myself: he will also pray for me.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO CHARLES GRANT, ESQ.

Bognor, Wednesday, October 1, 1800.

My dear Sir,

Your truly kind and Christian letter quite warmed my heart. I bless God that, in His correction, He remembers mercy, and graciously enables me to receive His chastisement as the discipline of a loving father. Whatever happens I hope to profit from it. I have been particularly impressed with the reproof (too much I must unaffectedly say deserved by myself) contained in the third of Revelations, which our Lord addresses to the lukewarm church of Laodicea, which is closed with those words of mercy,—"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous, therefore, and repent." Surely we all live below our privileges; and when misfortunes, from which my life has been remarkably exempt, come

upon us, and we are forced to our foundations, we are surprised to see what a store of consolations is treasured up for our use.

But I forgot, I have not yet told you that God has been pleased to bless the means used for my dearest wife's health, so far as that the delirium is gone off, and without any permanent injury to the brain, which, from its duration and force, was to be apprehended. Her fever, however, still continues high, and certainly we must not consider danger as yet over. Dr. Fraser providentially came at a most critical moment, and I really admire as well as bless the skill and caution and sagacity with which he felt his way. Stephen tells me of your kindness. I feel it as that which habit can render so familiar to me as to make me receive it without emotion.

The kindness and sympathy of all my friends is highly gratifying.

In extreme haste,

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

November 5, 1800.

My dear Muncaster,

My thoughts have been often at Muncaster, and I have been expecting letters from you to say whether we were to see you at the next meeting. I wish you

may come; I should not act towards you with the openness of friendship, if I did not tell you that, as Bob Thornton states, the Colchester* fellows are not as mute as their oysters on that subject. They consider not your *ultima Thule* distance, nor the system of affairs of which you are the grand moving principle and master-wheel.

We never met for more important purposes, and I hope may do some good, though not in the way which is expected from us. There seems, alas, no present prospect of peace — the accounts I receive of the state of the public mind from the most sober and credible relators is in the highest degree alarming. I wish much for information; and such as is authentic is very scarce. I am sending about a set of queries to friends in different parts. Let me inclose them to you and beg answers. You must know farmers on whom you can depend and — human nature being every where the same, — the jobbers, factors, &c., and the effects of their operations, must be uniform. I own I believe Adam Smith's doctrine is right in the main, and that the erecting the corn factor into a trade distinct from that of the farmer is for the consumer's benefit in general, and that in various ways. Yet there is room for abuse, and perhaps a principle may be pushed to an extreme, and thereby become mischievous. I must break off.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

* Lord Muncaster represented Colchester in the House of Commons.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE EARL OF GALLOWAY.

House of Commons, December 3, 1800.

My dear Lord,

* * * * * I assure you from my heart that no man respects more than myself the character of a nobleman or gentleman who lives on his own property in the country, improving his land, executing the duties of the magistracy, exercising hospitality, and diffusing comfort, and order, and decorum, and moral improvement, and, though last not least (where it has any place), religion, too, throughout the circle, greater or smaller, which he fills. Greatly I regret that due attention, as I think, has not been paid to this class of persons. Every inducement and facility should have been held out to them for fixing in the country, rather than in towns. Timber, bricks, and tiles, &c., used in improvements, should have been exempted from taxation. The house-tax and window-tax should have been increased on town-houses, and lessened on those of gentlemen residing on their own property. For in fact your country gentlemen are the nerves and ligatures of your political body, and they enable you to enforce laws which could not be executed by the mere power of government, and often preserve the public peace better than a regiment of soldiers. London is the gangrene of our body politic, and the bad humours it generates corrupt the whole mass. Through the medium of the great clubs, &c., one set of opinions, manners, modes of living, &c. are diffused through a vast mass of the higher orders.

Domestic restraints, and family economy, and order, are voted bores, while, from the nature of our constitution, aided by the increasing wealth and the prevailing sentiments of the age, whatever ways of thinking, speaking, and acting become popular in the higher classes, soon spread through every other. Hence respect for our nobility, and even for the king himself, instead of being regarded as a Christian duty, is deemed an antiquated prejudice.

Alas! alas! my dear lord, when I consider the singular blessings we have received at the hands of God, and how ungrateful and insensible we in general are, I am filled with grief and apprehension. "Shall not I visit for these things?" occurs but too naturally. Happy they who can secure a better subsistence than this world can supply, and who are urged, by considering the precariousness of all earthly happiness, to pursue, with greater earnestness, that which is alike excellent and unequalled in degree, as it is sure and unfading. I remain, my dear Lord,

Your lordship's obliged and faithful,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO ————.

Broomfield, January 8, 1801.

My dear M——,

I have been reproaching myself for not writing to you; but at this place I am even more pressed for

time than in London. The explanation is that I have brought with me a mass of unanswered letters, and that I find here a good library; the latter tempts me from the former, and the rest follows of course. I have been inquiring about a tutor for your nephew, and I doubt, between J. and F. The terms of the latter are lower; but that consideration is of no weight whatever for two years, when the effect extends throughout the whole of life. I shall soon be able to determine. I spoke to Charles with kindness, and so as not to render him at all desperate. This seems to me a right course to take in the treatment of youth; indeed, it is the course which our heavenly Father adopts towards us, and prescribes to us in our treatment of our fellows. It will give me sincere pleasure to hear that he is improved. He knows how to behave admirably.

Go on courageously, my dear M., remembering, in the midst of all your activity, to maintain the inward life of your religion. Gal. ii. last verse. O how much easier is it to be active than to be spiritually minded; yet God and our merciful Saviour look down with complacency on our labours of love. I am sometimes uneasy lest, in these hard times, you should not be easy as to money matters, and should not speak freely. I beg you so to do, and to believe that it is a real pleasure to me to contribute in any way to your comfort. You certainly possess the secret of economy in charity; but remember your being in a Yorkshire town is a sound reason for my helping you to the supplies, were there no connection between us. I am very glad to hear that Charles is at work. He and the hunters (and, God be thanked, the

poor, where fuel is scarce) will benefit from the mild weather. I beg my kind remembrances to all your party.

I remain, my dear M——,
Ever sincerely yours,
W. WILBERFORCE.

ALEX. KNOX, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketed — Mr. Knox, with tract.]

Shrewsbury, Jan. 24, 1801.

My dear Sir,

As you not only take an interest in all that concerns Mrs. Hannah More, but have been yourself also the object in some degree of the Rev. Mr. Daubeny's animadversions, I take the liberty of putting the enclosed into your hands. It is rather out of due time; but the necessity for something of the kind is evidently not over, since on so late an occasion as in the "British Critic" for December, Mr. Daubeny's misrepresentation of Mrs. More is very gravely commended as a just censure on her inaccuracy. As to his peevish remarks on your ranking Baxter with divines of the Establishment, I do not know that any thing had been said; nor, I own, did it strike me as at all necessary. But a worthy friend of mine, Mr. Stedman, a clergyman of this place, (the publisher of Doddridge's, Orton's, and Sir J. Stonhouse's Letters,) requested that I should take up that point also; and at his desire I wrote the few remarks which occupy

the first two or three pages. In what relates to Mrs. More, I hope I have done no injustice to her sentiments, nor have myself "darkened counsel by words without knowledge." It will be a gratification to me to have your free opinion, whether in the way of approbation or censure; though at the same time I am not sure that it is strictly proper for me to express such a wish. If I am taking too great a liberty, I trust you will forgive me.

I have been wishing for some time to write to you on another subject, concerning which we have already had some conversation — I mean the evident wish of certain ecclesiastics to obtain alterations in the act of toleration — but hitherto I have not been able. I have such nervous headachs and other accompanying complaints as often make me restless at night, and generally joyless through the day. I still hope, however, to catch a lucid interval to trouble you with some things which have occurred to me on that very important and most delicate subject.

I hope Mrs. Wilberforce (of whose recovery I was glad to be informed at the same time I heard of her dangerous illness) continues well. My sincere good wishes attend her, you, and your little ones.

I am, my dear Sir, with true regard,

Your faithful and obliged servant,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO W. HEY, ESQ.

March 17, 1801.

My dear Sir,

Mr. Brown and Mr. Fisher, with whom I had a good deal of conversation concerning the state of Leeds and its neighourhood, informed me that the sufferings of the poor in Leeds itself were much less than in the surrounding district; yet they spoke of Leeds itself as exhibiting a face of great wretchedness. I am therefore surprised to hear from you that your rates are no higher, and surely you might lay on a few shillings (excusing the poorer householders) without inconvenience, and thereby place your own poor in a situation which, considering the times, might justly be termed comfortable.

I extremely wish to receive distinct answers to my questions. I believe the three last (which convey some little idea of the ability of the parish to bear the burthens pressing on them) were omitted by a mistake of my young amanuensis. I now supply the defect, and I repeat my earnest wish that you would procure for me distinct answers to my queries from all the parishes in the manufacturing districts, of which Dr. Coulthurst and my other friends do not send me accounts. I will desire the doctor to send you word what parishes he will undertake for, and I beg you to employ at my expense a proper person to go round to the several parishes which are apprehended to be most distressed.

Great and numerous as are the objections against

granting public money for the relief of individual distress, yet on full consideration, and after weighing all other schemes which have been devised and suggested, I find it indispensable to resort to the national purse; and Mr. Pitt, though always backward, from constitution, from habit, from official feelings, &c., has been compelled to consent to this mode of relief. Mr. Addington is likewise, I trust, nearly convinced of the necessity of this measure. I am now scribbling whilst ready to faint, and must lay down my pen.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's Lodge, March 24, 1801.

My dear Friend,

* * * * *

The case is this: at Queen's we happened, unfortunately, to have several clever fellows some time ago who should have filled our offices of trust as tutors, &c.; but were unqualified on account of their principles. I was positively determined to have nothing to do with Jacobins or Infidels, and custom has placed in my power the appointment of the tutors, provided they be fellows of our own college. Our own being very unfit, we went out of college sorely against the wish of several; however, by determining to make no jobs of

such things, but to take the very best men I could find, I carried the matter through in no less than three instances — Thomason, Barnes, Sowerby. The consequence has been, a belief has taken place that we should continue to go out of college for candidates for fellowships after the cause had ceased. I have applications without end to this purpose, and not only so, but admonitions, sometimes anonymous. I enclose one that came lately. You cannot think how plagued I have been from a variety of quarters on this head, though I endeavour to make it known every where that we have now got two good tutors, and have no reason for going out of college.

The Bishop of Lincoln called on me the other day with Dr. Turner, and was inclined, I think, to have talked more politics than usual, if there had not been a third person present. He asked me whether a something was settled or not when I left town: he seemed to speak as if you knew, and as if I might have heard what he meant; something that was in doubt when he left London, and he seemed anxious to know if it was settled. For my part I talked quite in general, and told him, in answer to his express question, "What does Wilberforce think?" that you spent all your time and thought about the poor, and could get nothing done for them.

N. B. It is very positively said here that Pitt and the Bishop of Lincoln had a bill ready, if not printed, to take away all from the clergy, and make them pensioners at the Treasury.

Yours,

J. M.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Broomfield, July 18, 1801.

My dear Madam,

I have been desired by a Yorkshire friend of mine, a brother of Plumer's the lawyer, to request you to recommend to him any regulations, &c., for a school which he is opening on his estate in a village in Yorkshire, and any tracts, &c., for Sunday readings. Whatever you prescribe will be received as of approved authority, so do comply; and may it please God that this graft may lead to the production of good fruit, though in a colder climate. Secondly, the son of the Bishop of Nova Scotia is in England, endeavouring to form a library for a new university, and I have been desired to ask you for a copy of your works from yourself. It is too much almost to beg eight volumes, but the project appears to me well worthy of encouragement, and I recommend compliance. The establishment of a respectable and orthodox Literary Society in America, where French philosophy has shot its roots so generally as to poison the whole body of the soil, is a work of no small moment.

Thirdly, I was truly vexed to hear of your having been likely to lose money by the death of your future landlord, and shall be very glad to have it contradicted. Tell me how you have been in health as well as in purse.

If any answer be vouchsafed to Bere's rejoinder, let it

be very short. I have not read his last, and I am persuaded few will, if not drawn into notice by the opposition of your friends.

Farewell, my dear Madam.

Kind regards to Lieutenant-General Martha, and all your family, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.. TO ——.

Broomfield, August 4, 1801.

My dear M——,

Ever since I parted from you it has been in my mind to send you my serious thoughts on the situation and conduct of your young people, and on its natural effects. I pay no great compliment to my own sagacity when I say that I had anticipated your account. There was that utter vacuity and idleness which must depress the mind even of early youth itself, strongly as it seems secured by nature herself against the gloominess and lowness of spirits which want of occupation never fails to produce. The whole system must be changed. They must resolve to improve themselves, and consider themselves as bound no less to give to God and to their own consciences, as to their natural mentors and tutors, a strict account of their time, than they would be to account for diamonds if they were intrusted to their management.

I do not, of course, mean that they should be always at their books, far from it. Health of body is necessary for discharging the duties of life and enjoying its blessings; and for the preservation of health, especially in youth, much air and exercise are requisite; but these should all be taken on a plan and principle. There is a listless languid way of partaking of amusement which indicates that the person who is engaged in it has been equally languid in the hour of study and application to business. If, indeed, we had to do with those whose understandings were incurably defective, we must even make the best of it; but I see no great reason to complain of nature. * * * I have been forced to scribble so fast, that I fear I am scarce legible.

We think of you, and pray for you, and shall ever take a lively interest in all that concerns you.

I am, ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

REV. SAMUEL MARSDEN TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Parramatta, August 17, 1801.

Honoured Sir,

I have the happiness to inform you, that after much painful anxiety and many difficulties, the Orphan School at Sydney is at length opened for the reception of sixty girls. I cannot but view this institution as the foundation of religion and morality in this colony: —

without an establishment of this nature, to rescue the rising generation from ruin, it could never prosper. The unfortunate children who are now taken under the patronage and protection of the committee for orphans must otherwise have been lost to society. I have transmitted home by William Balmain, Esq., a copy of our proceedings to the present period, and requested him to wait upon you with them on his arrival in London.

If you, sir, should have it in your power in any way to promote the above institution, you will render an essential service to this infant settlement. Should we be able to get a building erected for the boys, we shall want a proper person to superintend the school. If one cannot be met with in England qualified for the situation, opportunities sometimes offer here, if Government would give any encouragement for a person of abilities to remain in the colony. Mr. Cover, one of the missionaries who returned from Otaheite to Port Jackson, was in many respects a proper person, but he could get no appointment, and therefore returned to England. Should Mr. Balmain wait upon you, he will give you every information respecting the state of the children.

I hope my colleague, the Rev. Richard Johnson, has safely arrived in England before this period. In consequence of his weakly state, I do not expect to see him any more in this country. My duty is now very hard; having no assistance, and preaching both at Sydney and Parramatta every sabbath day: much of the care of the Orphan School also devolves upon me. The colony is not much better in a moral sense than it was when Governor Hunter was here. Governor King has taken

every means to prevent the introduction of so great a quantity of spirits as formerly; fifty-six thousand gallons of wine and spirits have been sent out of the cove since November last. These regulations may be productive of some good consequences in the end. I see little prospect of any reformation amongst the prisoners at large.

At present bread is very scarce, and the people suffer much from the want of it. This want must be attributed in a great measure to the idleness and drunkenness of the inhabitants. They put little or no value upon their crops, when harvest comes take no care of their grain, and frequently part with the principal part for spirits. You, perhaps, will have seen Governor Hunter since his return: his memory is dear in this settlement, notwithstanding all the odium cast upon his public character. Governor King is not more happy in his administration than Governor Hunter was. I do not expect his stay will be long; he finds much to contend with. I beg to refer you to Mr. Balmain for any further information respecting this country; and remain,

Honoured Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

SAMUEL MARSDEN.

REV. JOHN VENN TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Swansea, September 18, 1801.

Dear Sir,

Your two letters have been forwarded to me at this place, where I have been riding amongst the beautiful scenes which this charming country affords. I purpose returning on Wednesday through Bath, where I intend to stay seven or eight days.

I highly approve of your taking your child from the servants, from whom he might learn many maxims and practices which it would require much pains afterwards to eradicate; but I very much doubt of your being able to meet with a governor who would devote his time and attention to him in the manner you wish at so early an age. Men qualified as you would desire have become so qualified by much thinking and reading, by uninterrupted improvement of leisure hours, and by conversation with persons of learning and reflection upon subjects which call forth the powers of the mind. I very much doubt whether such a person could so far alter his habits as to give up his chief attention to a child, whose versatility, trifling, and forgetfulness would be a constant source of vexation. In the order of nature, I think, that the education of very young children is committed to women; they only can bear with all their little foibles — they possess a tenderness and an affection for them which is never wearied out; — women possess a patience and assiduity in lesser things, which is rarely met with in men. A father's affection, indeed,

will alter his very disposition; but I am speaking only of the difficulty which a person who is not a parent would experience in endeavouring to supply that place which women are, I think, exclusively qualified to fill. It perhaps may, indeed, be a difficult thing to determine the precise age at which a boy may be taken from the nursery or from a governess, and put under the care of a tutor. It must vary with the capacity, health, and disposition of the child.

Dr. —— would, I think, be an improper person, even if he would undertake such an office. His temper is close and reserved, his manners grave and thoughtful, and he is often silent. These qualities do not suit children. His talents are formed to investigate abstruse points and elucidate truth, not to ingratiate him with children, and minister instruction to them in a pleasing form. Added to which I am uncertain respecting his religious opinions; a point doubtless of the first importance.

I will, however, bear in mind your wishes. Perhaps a suitable person may hereafter occur; and should such an one offer, it will certainly be well to secure him, though not immediately wanted.

I beg my best respects and most affectionate remembrances to Mrs. W.

I remain, dear Sir,

Ever yours,

J. Venn.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

London, Dec. 11, 1801

My dear Friend,

This whole morning I have been besieged or beseeched (blame Milton, not me) by a succession of assailants, whose attacks have been rendered more worrying by my mind being a good deal engrossed. May God enable us to say from the heart, Thy will be done. I am now taking up my pen (nearly time for the House) in the War Office, while waiting to speak to the Secretary at War; but though I may scribble rapidly, do not think that my sentiments, however hastily expressed, are hastily conceived. On the contrary, they are the result of reflection, and my deliberate conclusion. I have received from the Bishop of London a note, which I will enclose for your perusal. I perfectly agree with our friends at Fulham, that you had better not consult Gibbs *; I cannot, however, say, that I am so clear, that at present you ought to abstain altogether from publishing.

God bless you, and guide you. I adhere to my old opinion, that all these clouds, like the rack of the sky, will soon blow away, and leave all clear and calm.

With kind remembrances,

Yours, ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

The Bishop was very unwilling to read any of Bere's trash; and really it is a hard service to labour through.

* Mrs. Hannah More had been advised to take the opinion of Sir Vicary Gibbs on Mr. Bere's publication.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

London, Dec. 17, 1801.

My dear Friend,

The Bishop's note was but five lines, and I told you all the substance of it. But one word more. The Bishop, the other day, warmly expressed in conversation what he may perhaps express to you in writing; and lest he should, I must anticipate him. He seemed to wish you would give up all your schools, by way of escaping from a situation which exposed you to attacks and conflicts to which your health was not equal.

But the Bishop never saw the schools: he never saw the country in its former and in its present state. He has no adequate notion of the degree in which it has pleased God to bless your and your sister's efforts; nor of the consequent hostility to be expected from those who are represented in Scripture (which does not refine away plain practical truths as we are apt to do) as opposing the establishment of the kingdom of Christ; whether evil spirits or human beings acting under their influence. "I would have come unto you, even I, Paul," says the Apostle, "once, and again, but Satan hindered us." How hindered?—not by standing in the way, and obstructing his journey, but by stirring up his agents; probably by creating a necessity for St. Paul's continuance where he was, by carving out work for him, &c.; and I doubt not several of those who were thus doing the devil's work were unwittingly his instruments: they perhaps thought they were doing God service.

But I have been led off from my main topic. Apply what I have said, however, to your own case, and be thankful that it is so far applicable. But for the relinquishment of the schools — so long as you can, continue them through evil report and good report. Quench not the Spirit; but so far as you can, forward His progress and multiply His subjects, praying earnestly for strength, for wisdom, for meekness, and that love which can suffer long, and yet be kind, without dissimulation; can bear all things — hope all things — endure all things. Indeed, my friend, I am sanguine as to the issue here — even here — upon this bank and shoal of time.

You shall hear from me more about this writing an answer.

Yours, with kind remembrances, in great haste,

Ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

REV. J. CROSSE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Bradford, Dec. 26, 1801.

Honoured Sir,

Two things I am no stranger to, viz. the multiplicity of your engagements, and the liberality of your disposition; and, therefore, when I took the freedom to write you my sentiments, it was with this restriction, namely, that I might make no encroachments upon the one or the other. Do not, then, my good sir, take it amiss that I return your note. At present, we are rich;

another year it may be the reverse, and if so, I may possibly request your assistance.

The Dissenters are daily gaining ground in these parts, and, indeed, in most parts of the kingdom; and it cannot well be otherwise, and among other reasons principally for the two following: — 1st, The facility with which they can build their chapels; 2d, The small expense at which they can supply them with ministers. Mr. H. here has not, I suppose, above 20*l.* per annum, but then he teaches a school, and keeps a shop. Another reason may be added; the heads of these separate congregations acquire a consequence which they could never hope for in the Establishment, and they all hang together; whereas, in the national church, we are a rope of sand. So far as nature prevails, the Dissenters must accomplish the downfall of the Establishment; and say what they please about candour, they must, on worldly principles, envy our many temporal advantages. I am certain, whenever the period arrives, it will hurt the Dissenters most — I mean in spiritual matters. Pray excuse the above scrawl, and with my respectful compliments to Mrs. W.,

I am,
Honoured Sir,
Yours, &c.
J. Crosse.

ALEX. KNOX, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted — Mr. Knox, Catholic Question, Private.]

Shrewsbury, 1801.

My dear Sir,

Though possibly I may have already said more than enough on the point which you mentioned, yet I was not able to say all I wished on Saturday night; I shall therefore take the liberty of offering you an appendix, couched in as brief a compass as I can.

There is in my mind an additional reason why the R. C. of Ireland should not be trifled with, and that is, that, though no promise has been made to them, things have been said on both sides of the water which have unavoidably excited their hopes, and certainly had an influence on their conduct. Let them be disappointed, and what will be the consequence? Will they not necessarily become more disaffected — more desperate than ever? The Irish Roman Catholics are full of sensibility — full of hardihood — abundant in talent — accustomed to combination, and prompt to enterprise. They are, in my mind, capable of being either as faithful subjects, or as pernicious rebels, as any class of beings upon earth. Let them now think themselves duped, and they would be either less or more than men if they are not deeply exasperated and lastingly alienated; on the contrary, treat them liberally — give them their heart's desire — their honest, natural wish, and why should they not be loyal subjects? Gratitude, honour, self-interest, will all

unite to make them such; and what conceivable circumstance will remain to give them a contrary direction?

An objection may possibly arise from the Protestant Dissenters here taking advantage of their full enfranchisement to repeat their own remonstrances against the test-law; but they might as well argue now from presbyterianism being the established religion in North Britain, or from Protestant Dissenters being for some years past free from the test-law in Ireland. But the truth is, the respective circumstances are so dissimilar, as to warrant no argument from one to the other. The Irish Roman Catholics have a demand for full enfranchisement, both on policy and on equality, not only as constituting the majority of that country, but as being the aboriginal natives of the soil — and they may safely be possessed of political powers in Ireland which it might not be equally safe to intrust to doubtful descriptions here; for the difference of local circumstances is such, that the very privileges which have only civil and personal effects there, may have political and party consequences in England. Remote as the Irish Roman Catholics are from the grand scene of political action, — the Irish Sea rolling, and for ever to roll, between them and the great political centre — let their political privileges be what they may, they can only exercise them locally; that is, as I before observed, for the gratification or aggrandisement of themselves or their domestic connections; but never could they so put them forth as to be felt here; — but the Protestant Dissenters of England are upon the spot; they have continual access to the political centre, and can lay their hands on the political machine; and if there was a

strong inclination, perhaps spoil its movements: what therefore may be done for the Irish Roman Catholics affords no new argument to any other claimants; and, of course, the apprehension of such claims ought not for a moment to be considered as throwing a bar in the way of their gratification.

At the same time, I mean not to say one tittle in favour of the test-law in this country, excepting merely this, that I should be sorry to see it otherwise than gratuitously repealed. No concession, on any ground, should ever be made to sturdy claimants; but where a grievance is to be removed, let Government so do it, so seize an opportune moment, as to evince that it originates with Government, and that clamour or faction has contributed nothing to it: but this apart; — I own I have no liking to the test law; I think it makes Dissenters disloyal much more than it guards against their disloyalty; for what does it do? — it does not pretend to shut them out of parliament, where most is to be done in the way of good or evil, while it affects to preclude them from being corporators in a paltry borough, as if it signified who were in those subaltern situations. But it does not, in fact, keep them out of corporations — Bristol, one of the next to the metropolis, is at this moment under their entire dominion; and does not the yearly act of indemnity prove its inefficiency? It is, I am sure, very efficient in mischief; it is a brand and stigma from which human nature revolts; it is, in short, like a clog which I have sometimes seen hung to the neck of a straying animal, which, however, failed to keep him at home, and only provoked him every now and then to growl and grumble, and bite at it.

If I have tired you, you will forgive me, because you brought it on yourself. I have been suffering while writing from a dismal headach: let this be my apology for an almost illegible epistle.

Pardon me for just asking your opinion on one point. Do you think the last paragraph in my little pamphlet too severe? — I mean the kind of comparison between Mr. D. and Peter Pindar. Perhaps you would not choose to give an opinion; if so, I would by no means press you. If you do, it shall be confidential, and one line will be sufficient to convey it. I have thoughts of a second edition, with some few alterations, which is the reason of giving you this trouble; but I say again, if you feel the least difficulty, say nothing.

I am, my dear sir,
Your faithful servant,
ALEX. KNOX.

P.S. I hope you have made acquaintance with my friend Lord Castlereagh; he is *knowing* about Ireland.

MR. KING, AMERICAN MINISTER, TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

January 8, 1802.

Will you, my dear Sir, take an early opportunity of conversing with Mr. Addington and Lord Hawkesbury, for the purpose of impressing upon them the value and importance of cultivating, in the many and easy ways

they can do, the best possible harmony between our respective countries? No people ever had so many ways of engaging the good will and good wishes of another, as England has in respect to America, and, with rare exceptions, none ever employed fewer.

Some recent information that I have received from America gives me unusual conviction and solicitude on this subject. I have so often urged topics of this sort, and pointed out the occasions for the application of them, that I feel a reluctance in repeating them, even when my mind is acquiring stronger convictions of their importance.

I don't mean to insinuate that Ministers are deaf to justice, and that they adopt measures of which we may justly complain. No, it is the omission of minor offices, which like an omitted visit produces more coldness and finally dislike, than a downright injury.

I beg you to excuse me; I know myself to be right in these reflections, which regard the common good of our countries; and though others turn a deaf ear, I am sure you will listen to my complaints with indulgence.

Faithfully, your obedient servant,

R. KING.

N.B. I remove to town on Tuesday next.

——— TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

April 5, 1802.

Dear Sir,

At the hazard of encroaching on your time, I am tempted to send you an account of the death of Robert Cowen of Helmsley, the favourite servant of the late Dr. Conyers, whom I suppose you must have known, as I have heard him talk of you.

I saw Cowen at Helmsley only two days before he died. Our conversation turned upon the low state of religion there. Though the parish is populous, there are seldom twenty people at church besides a few Sunday scholars; and such is the declension amongst Dr. Conyers's old hearers, that there is not above one house in the town where family prayer is kept up.

Poor Helmsley how fallen! I look with regret at the pleasant mansion your father built for Dr. Conyers, and which has been many years untenanted. Religion then was all the fashion, and the inhabitants fed richly on daily ordinances and expositions. Too richly, perhaps, as most of them appear to have been palled. The fallen state of that town ought to warn congregations in the established church who are deprived of evangelical pastors against the evil of dissenting; for the Helmsley people, impatient with Dr. Conyers's successor, who certainly was of very opposite views, built a dissenting chapel, and crowded to it in shoals. After many vicissitudes of preachers and preaching, it is shut up, and the

people go no where, but content themselves with railing at formal ministers and blind guides.

I am, with unfeigned respect, yours.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO H. BANKES, ESQ.

Broomfield, September 9, 1802.

My dear Bankes,

Though, strictly speaking, your letter required no answer, yet the foul fiend procrastination has, I fear, had a greater share than any better cause in occasioning my silence. . . . I have been running over Gibbon's Decline, &c. He is an extraordinary man. Coxcomb all over; but of great learning as well as very great show of it. He has the merit also of never declining a difficulty. But his style is abominably affected, and perfectly corresponds with Lord Sheffield's (of Great Britain and Ireland) account of his mode of composition — and then his paganism is vastly more confirmed than that of Tully, or any other of the old school.

I did look at the French constitution, and saw the same cause for admiration as in a former instance: I mean admiration of the genius of the deviser, who could create so many orders, and give so much apparatus, and yet part with so little power. Yet experience proves, that if ever so minute a germ of political power be bestowed on any order who are likely to have personal weight and influence to throw into the scale, liberty and a division of political power in the constitu-

tion may in time be the result. Montagu, who lately returned, told me that the city and suburbs of Paris exhibited more than we could conceive the face of a military government. Montagu was at the National Institute when Bonaparte spoke for twenty minutes. The men of science and letters live in clover, and account it the best of all possible governments.

All good attend you. Believe me, my dear Bankes,

Ever very affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P.S. Only think of Mr. and Mrs. Fox. It really is a marriage, and I understand has been long performed, I mean the ceremony. Fox declared it now, that when he should return it might be an old thing. Fox and the Grand Consul are not much of a mind on any topic.

SIR CHARLES MIDDLETON, BART. TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Teston, October 26, 1802.

My dear friend,

It was my intention to have begged you to meet Mr. Pitt here if his stay had been lengthened beyond a day; but being obliged to be in town sooner than he first proposed, I had no time for invitation.

He came here on Friday and staid till Saturday afternoon. Mr. Fordyce accompanied him, and Lord G. Campbell: both farmers met him here; Mr. Gambier was likewise of the party.

His inquiries were very minute and judicious, and it is incredible how quickly he comprehends things, and how much farther he reasons on them than I can follow him. The day was very favourable, and we spent upwards of four hours on the farm and at the oil mill. Our in-door work was accounts, journals, forms, &c.

Upon the whole, I believe Mr. Pitt has it in his power to become the first farmer in England, if he thinks the pursuit worth his time and attention.

I have satisfied him, that much of the former is not required after his farm is brought into order, and that I managed three separate farms during the time I was in the admiralty and navy offices, and with more amusement than trouble to myself.

He promises me frequent visits in his road to and fro, and which may happen if he continues his present pursuit, as we are not a mile out of his way. If this should happen, I shall be obliged to you to give him the meeting.

He seemed much amused while here, and as I always had an attachment to him, I was sincerely glad to see him. What an instrument in the hands of Providence might not this man be, if he was surrounded with men of equal probity and disinterestedness as himself. But as this can never be expected, we can only look up and wonder.

I shall hope in the course of the winter, if we live so long, to see you and Mrs. W. here during some part of the time. I beg my kindest regards to her, and believe me always,

Very affectionately yours,

CHARLES MIDDLETON.

RALPH CREYKE, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted, " Friendly, Paley, &c."]

Marton, January 3, 1803.

My dear Sir,

. . . . . I have been reading Dr. Paley's " Natural Theology," and never was more delighted than I have been with his mathematical demonstration and elucidation of that cheering comfort — the goodness of the Almighty. Whilst I was at lectures at Cambridge I was completely tired of the " high priori road;" but now in the country, when I am in the low " primrose path," I think that I walk surely. His writings have always charmed me with their perspicuity and strict argument; and I feel my faith confirmed by his evidences, and particularly by that nice and accurate summing up of all the circumstantial evidence in his " Horæ Paulinæ;" my reason wonderfully assisted and comforted by his " Natural Theology," and every duty and every exertion encouraged by his philosophy. I never read any part of his works that afterwards I do not feel myself (*absit superbia dicto*) a better man. . . .

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO RALPH CREYKE, ESQ.

Broomfield, January 8, 1803.

My dear Sir,

I fully intended that this morning should not pass without my answering your friendly letter, but

I must write *en galop* to keep to my purpose. However, in writing to a friend the stream of thought may be allowed to flow as rapidly as it will; and if it brings rubbish along with it, as torrents are wont to do, yet he will receive it with a welcome, in consideration of the source from which it issues. The word "rapidly" reminds me of a ridiculous story of the late Lord Stormont, who was what may be well called a heavy speaker, but who, having been ambassador at Paris, was listened to (and not undeservedly, as being a man of sense). A foreigner was attending the House of Lords' debates below the bar, and his friend, an English travelled gentleman, was overheard translating to him Lord Stormont's harangue. As his Lordship went along in his drawling tone of language, "*Eh bien,*" replied the foreigner for some time, till his English friend at length proceeding to say, "*Il dit qu'il passe rapidement,*" &c. over that part. "No," says the foreigner, "I'm sure you're cheating me now." It is an absurd thing to tell on paper; but if you remember Lord Stormont's manner, and contrast it with the astonishment of the impatiently vivacious Frenchman, who, after bearing as well as he could the tardy enunciation of the noble Lord, was at last to be insulted with "*Je passe rapidement,*" you would own it would be a fine scene for the pencil of Hogarth.

Many thanks for your kind congratulations. I seem to myself a much more respectable member of society since I became a father of four children. . . . On Monday morning I was here interrupted, and forced to break off; so being unwilling to send off such a strange fragment of a letter, I resolved to keep it till to-day, and

now I must *passe rapidement* to get my letter off by this day's post — so numerous are the visiters who at this short distance from town find their way to my country retirement. One of my visiters has given a melancholy tinge to my thoughts. The widow of a clergyman who lived near the Humber, in Lincolnshire, and I believe was much respected — on what occasion, think you, is she come up to town? To attend on a son's last moments, who having gone young into the army in the American war, has of course been separated from her for many years, though still followed by maternal tenderness, and who is now under sentence of death for forgery; indeed, there were several indictments against him, so that a pardon, or even a mitigation of the sentence, was out of the question. I can't find that there was much harm (using those words in the ordinary sense of the world) in the young man. He had been patronised by the Marquis of Buckingham and by Mr. Windham. Alas! there is a wife too, a poor Scotch girl, without a single friend or acquaintance in London, and an infant daughter at the breast; and this leads me (by what train of ideas? you will say) to Dr. Paley. It is the truth, however, such was the train of ideas. Would that I could trace them out over your fireside at Marton! for there we should be to-day, if the weather without be as boisterously inclement with you as it is with us. I lay the scene of our interview there rather than here, because, when I can take my choice, I always place it as far as I can from the great city; being in this respect of the very opposite taste to Dr. Johnson, and preferring the *O rus*

quando te aspiciam to the high tide of sentiment at Charing Cross or the Strand.

But for Dr. Paley, he is assuredly a charming writer; unequalled in perspicuity, and that, I doubt not, from superior clearness and precision in his conceptions. His language is as forcible as the great doctor's above mentioned, without its turgid sesquipedality, if I may describe the Johnsonian style by a Johnsonian epithet. Above all, his illustrations are inimitably happy; nor can I deny that we owe him the highest obligations for his masterly explication of the various evidences of Christianity, on all of which he has shed a light, and by bringing them to meet in one point, accumulated an amount of force (speaking philosophically) which to a fair mind seems irresistible. It gives me pain not to stop here; but I must go on; and after all this, and much more which might be said (and no one would with more pleasure pour forth Dr. Paley's copious eulogy), yet must I say it — he appears to me a most dangerous writer, likely to lead his readers into errors concerning the essential nature, genius, and design of Christianity. I cannot now go at large into this important discussion; but we will take it *ad referendum* when we can have a little quiet domestic chat, to which, by the way, I assure you I look forward. I will, however, just let out a hint or two of my general meaning.

Dr. Paley, then, as I think, conducts his readers to the threshold of Christianity, but there he leaves them; but leaves them, as I fear, with a disposition to misconceive the great end and object of the Christian dispensation. Christianity appears to me to consider the

world as in a state of alienation from God, as lost in depravity and guilt; pointing out at the same time "how we may escape from the wrath to come," from the natural consequences of that guilt and depravity; and not only how we may be absolved from the guilt, but emancipated from the power of moral corruption. This must be effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, and under its influence, working of course through the medium of our natural and moral powers (for I am the farthest in the world from considering man as a machine), we are to be rendered "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Now, the grand evil is, that men are not sensible of their lost state, chiefly because they are not sensible of the nature, and, still more, of the real guilt of sin. It is, indeed, a necessary consequence of our natural corruption, that we are disposed to be insensible to it. If we will be honest with ourselves, should we previously to Revelation have thought, that the guilt and evil of sin are such, as that to infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, it should appear necessary that the partaker of a divine nature should empty himself of His glory, should become a sharer in all the weaknesses of our human being, and at last die a painful and ignominious death, in order to atone for the sins of mankind? The estimate of the guilt of sin with which we are here furnished, as well as the estimate of the amount of that suffering from which it was worth while (if I may be allowed the expression), even at such a price, to redeem the sons of men, are such as no other considerations will supply; yet we cannot doubt that these are the true estimates. Therefore, it

ought to be the grand object of every moral writer (for what is time, even the longest life, to eternity?) to produce in us that true and just sense of the intensity of the malignity of sin (to use one of Paley's own forcible terms), and of the real magnitude of our danger, which would be likely to dispose us to exert ourselves to the utmost to obtain deliverance from the condemnation and emancipation from the power of sin. Now, here Dr. P. appears to me to fail.

Then again, he seems to lose sight, in a great degree, of that attribute of the Deity on which so much stress is laid in Scripture — I mean His holiness and justice. You will readily see how this is connected with his sense of the intensity of the guilt of moral evil. I readily grant that, prior to Revelation, we might have formed an idea of a Supreme Being of unmixed goodness (I mean goodness in a limited sense, for I have no doubt that in a true sense the justice and holiness of the Deity are in perfect harmony with His goodness); but, as it has pleased God to give us a delineation of His own character and attributes, we are bound to draw from that Divine source all our conceptions of them, and that the express statements of the Scriptures on this head accord exactly with the conclusions we should be led to form from the scheme of redemption, I need only suggest. But Dr. Paley seems to have too low a standard of moral right and wrong, and a standard which does not assign the true scriptural place on the moral scale to those sins which respect the Supreme Being. Scripture appears to me to consider the want of a supreme love and fear of God as the pregnant germ of all moral evils.

There will be no end of my letter if I do not stop here; and now I am doubtful if I ought to send what I have written. You will call it a sermon rather than a letter; yet, in writing to a friend, "I love to pour out all my soul;" and why should we practise any reserve on the most interesting of all subjects? A more reasonable doubt about sending my letter is suggested by the fear lest I may have done so little justice to my opinions, as scarcely in any degree to have put you in possession of my meaning. Such as it is, however, consider it, for such it really is, as an effusion of friendship: *that* I trust will give it a merit in your eyes. Give me credit for having a meaning where you may doubt about its justness, and note it in your memory for future verbal discussion. I have scarce left myself room to say that my dear Mrs. W. is going on extremely well, I thank God; and I beg my cordial remembrances to all your family.

Believe me always, my dear Sir,

affectionately and sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO REV. THOMAS GISBORNE.

Broomfield, Jan. 21, 1803.

My dear Gisborne,

I longed to assist in the cabinet councils which must have been held at the Lodge when Henry Thornton

was with you; but my time for visiting you must be the summer, and there is no visit to which I uniformly look forward with more pleasure.

From many necessary causes it has happened that the long recess, and still another shorter one, have stolen away without my having begun upon the abolition pamphlet; and now, when I cast my eye on the plan I had formed, the very sight of it is sufficient to deter me from the attempt, by the assurance it conveys that it will not be finished and printed in due time. I am at a loss how to proceed, conscious that it would be highly advantageous to have some short summary of the grounds of our conclusions laid before the public, considering the utter ignorance which prevails on the subject, the multitude of new members (one hundred Irishmen at once), &c. &c. I recur to my original thought, that you and I might jointly fabricate a piece, but only because I fear you would not undertake it alone. To all your arguments against the harnessing of two such coursers of ethereal race, I only answer, that the consequence must be, that you must undertake the task alone. Indeed, my dear Gisborne, it would be an eminent service — a service to which you are already pledged, which, above all, you can render, and no one else can. You can carry on your labours beyond the period of the re-opening of the session, when I must close mine. I will send you down immediately any tracts you may want, and fill up any blanks of numbers you may not have by you. Your little pamphlet is altogether the most spirited piece which ever appeared on the subject. It might be enlarged, and perhaps some statements, which

were then unnecessary from the subject's being fresh in the minds of men, may now require to be particularised—*E. g.* The ground of our charge that the slave-trade causes kidnapping, judicial iniquity, barbarism, &c. &c.

Something or other must be published. It will be impossible to bring within the compass of a debate half of what ought to be brought before the members. Besides, how few comparatively will suspend their opinions till they go to the House. The bad effect of having the minds of men so freely open to misrepresentation was illustrated last spring, by the shabbiest tract you ever saw, full of lies, &c., dull, prosing, pert, vapid; yet I found it was sent round to the Irish members, and for want of better stuff it gained admission. Nature abhors a vacuum.

Yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P.S. I declare that running over your little tract above mentioned has made me burn with indignation.

REV. WM. RICHARDSON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted, "Pri.—Mr. Richardson, very pleasing."]

York, January 24, 1803.

Dear Sir,

I have often reflected upon the commission which you gave me, in summer, when I had the pleasure of seeing you at York, though I have never yet exercised it. I believe the clergy to whom you allude are, in

general, very honest and conscientious men, who act from principle, and that they deserve the character you have given them in your book, of being attached to the constitution of their country, both in church and state: thus it is with the *genus;* but when we descend to the *species,* it is amazingly diversified by peculiarity of temper, education, rank, and connection. Much depends upon the cast of the writer or preacher that made the first impression upon their mind and conscience. Some of them lean too much towards the Methodists or Dissenters, from whom they first received their religious impressions, and break through the rules of the Establishment, in order as they suppose, to do more good. The irregularities of these men have brought many serious inconveniences upon us, who proceed in an orderly way, by alienating from us the hearts of some of our flock, who are dazzled with the appearance of superior zeal and courage in such characters; and by prejudicing the minds of our governors against the whole body of the evangelical clergy as dangerous and disaffected men.

As the revival of practical religion in the metropolis was owing to the labours of the irregular preachers, it has introduced and established there a very bad taste among the hearers, which must be humoured by those who expect to get an audience in London. I need not describe to you the kind of meretricious eloquence that is necessary to acquire popularity there. This perverted taste has spread all over the kingdom, and vitiated the gravity and chaste simplicity of our pulpit style in many places. Few have escaped the infection. Among the vast numbers that are earnest and sincere preachers of

the Gospel, there are not many to be found whose instructions would be listened to by a correct ear without a mixture of disgust.

I thank you for your present of Mr. Gisborne's Sermons, which are certainly free from the cant of the times, and yet warm and fervent. I find nothing to censure in them, but too much haste in deciding upon a main point of controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians, upon which so much may be said on both sides. He may alter his opinion on the subject if he live much longer, and had better have left it undecided.

I make this letter a cover for a communication to the "Christian Observer," which you will be so kind as to convey. As I harp too much on a tender string, I am an unwelcome guest to many of their readers. But the evil of schism, and its mischievous tendencies, are so little perceived or guarded against by the serious clergy, that I cannot help calling their attention to it on all proper occasions. It is our weak side, and a point in which our cause is the most vulnerable and indefensible. On the ground of doctrine, our title to the character of true churchmen may be completely vindicated, but not on that of discipline and order.

Allow me to congratulate you on the addition made to your family. I hope Mrs. Wilberforce, and all her little flock, together with their father, are well.

May the blessing of God rest upon you all!

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate

W. Richardson.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE RIGHT HON. W. PITT.

Broomfield, February 4, 1803.

My dear Pitt,

You have read with horror, if you have read at all, the account of the French atrocities in St. Domingo. They are pursuing a system of extermination, and depending on no other expedient. The newspapers having affirmed that our government had been applied to for co-operation, I made inquiry, and I have established to my own satisfaction, that (though Addington says government have nothing to do with it) our merchants have been applied to for ships to serve as transports, &c., and I believe that some engagements of this sort have been actually contracted.

A friend of mine, who, though no civilian, is not unacquainted with the law of nations, assures me, that it is an infringement of neutrality to let out shipping to a belligerent power, and that the individuals of a state have no right to act in such a case any otherwise than as the government may authorise; but in the present instance, the power against which these ships would be employed is not merely a power with which we are not at war; it is a power with which we recently had a treaty of friendly connection, which they religiously observed; — what is more, that power consists, in part, of a number of individuals to whom we had promised their liberty. We marched them over to Toussaint, and perhaps in the peace, some stipulation should have been made for their enjoying the privileges

which we had promised them. But not merely to leave this undone, but to join in abetting their destruction by means the most faithless and cruel which the French revolution, so fertile in perfidy and cruelty, ever employed in its very worst times, and through its very worst agent, is surely a degree of baseness which even those whose moral nerves are hardened to such a temper as to enable them without remorse to defend the slave-trade, can scarcely justify.

For the policy of the measure, I have no time for further discussion, nor, in writing to you, can it be necessary. I will only say, that judging on principles the most dryly selfish, what more or better could we desire than to see Buonaparte gradually wearing away his strength, disgusting his army, &c., on the one hand, while the free blacks of St. Domingo are gradually wearing away on the other, to the great delight of our eaters of turtle? But if, by our means, Buonaparte is enabled to send over so many troops at once as to carry his purpose, both his army and that of his opponents will be reserved for future service; and is it too much to say that this service will be the attack of our colonial possessions? Let me beg you to consider this well, my dear Pitt, and to write to Addington about it. I do not like to talk with him on it, though I did yesterday, conceiving it was only due to him to let him know how I felt, and, indeed, to ask if government had any thing to do with it. I cannot help suspecting that our merchants would not engage in such a transaction without some hint that the service would not be disagreeable to administration. I must say I feel most strongly on this subject, and if you will support me,

there is no consideration on earth which shall prevent my proceeding, if necessary, by impeachment against those who may be concerned in it (if I find that the law of nations is as I suppose); at all events, unless government will prevent the transaction from going forward, which a word from them would stop, I am resolved to bring it before the House. I shall be greatly obliged to you for a line. I scarce need say that I abhor, from my inmost soul, the idea of cultivating Buonaparte's friendship, and the continuance of peace, by lending ourselves to his abominable projects. Once more, let me beg you to let me have a line, and mention when you mean to be in town.

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

My direction is either London or Clapham Common.

RT. HON W. PITT TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted, " Pri. — Our helping French, &c."]

Walmer Castle, February 10, 1803.

My dear Wilberforce,

I should have written to you sooner, but a slight bilious attack which has confined me three or four days, made me unable to judge when I should move to town. I am now almost entirely recovered, and shall probably set out the beginning of the next week. As soon as I

arrive, I shall be very glad to talk over with you all the questions which arise out of the horrid scenes at St. Domingo. There is, unhappily, no termination of the contest to which one can look without dread, and therefore no system of conduct which can be pursued with entire satisfaction; but, certainly, to aid the French in their present measures is as contrary to all general ideas of policy, as it is revolting to our feelings; and I think there must be some legal mode of preventing British merchants from being concerned in such a transaction. But there are such strange feelings and prejudices on all subjects which are in any degree connected with the slave-trade, that great difficulties may arise in the way of any measure that can be proposed to parliament on the subject. This, however, I shall be very desirous of discussing with you.

In the mean time, I am sure no possible good can be done by my writing to Addington.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. PITT.

JOSEPH HARDCASTLE, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted, " Hardcastle. — General disposition to charter ships to French for St. Domingo. Alas! "]

Old Swan Stairs, February 21. 1803.

My dear Sir,

I am informed that the probability of a demand for shipping on French account is the subject of general conversation among ship-owners, and that the prevailing

opinion among them is, that it is no violation of any existing law to enter into such engagements; and as the terms given by the agents of the French are far more advantageous than can be obtained in our West Indian trade, there seems a general disposition to charter their ships in what is called the French West India trade; that is, to carry out stores, or probably troops, as may be required when they get to a French port, and bring home produce.

You are the best judge whether this information admits of any useful application.

I am, with sincere respect,
Dear Sir,
Your faithful and obedient servant,
JOSEPH HARDCASTLE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THOMAS BABINGTON, ESQ.

London, March 4, 1803.

My dear Tom,

I am writing to you without the loss of a moment, because Macaulay told me to-day that a ship was on the point of sailing to Madeira. The gentleman at Madeira, of whom you speak, is constitutionally shy in the extreme, but I can also conceive a certain dread of you as over religious. You will, however, I am sure, conduct your-

self towards him so as to moderate his prejudices; and who knows but that you may have an opportunity of throwing in something by and by which may tend to his eternal benefit? I remember hearing that Governor Johnstone, meeting Lady Huntingdon at Cheltenham, expected her to open on him directly with a religious battery — at a second meeting, the same. She behaved with great politeness and propriety, but did not bring forward her religion; this piqued him, and it went on, till after a while he was very earnest with her to explain to him fully all her sentiments. This of course she did, he listening with the most serious attention to what he would probably have heard with coldness or contempt, if she had bolted it out to him prematurely and unseasonably. Not that I suspect you of thus brusquing matters. It is rather my own fault where, which is too often the case, I am not too negligent about the spiritual concerns of my friends. But the story came into my head, and so I tell it.

A word on my speech at the opening of the session. I believe, from what you say, that you would have quite agreed with me, for I did not push my doctrine at all to extremes. I only urged, that both reason, history, and recent experience, concurred in inculcating on us the duty of being very cautious indeed in our engagements to foreign powers; that we were too little impressed with a sense of the value of our insular situation, and of the peculiar blessing of being naturally armed with the instrument of a naval rather than a military force; that we scarcely ever ought to engage in continental quarrels as principals; and that we should

ever be on our guard against being drawn into continuing too long a war, which, in its origin, might be just and necessary. There was a good deal of history, in which I was clearly right; and Lord Hawkesbury expressly told me he did not mean that I had affirmed the positions he combated.

I think you would have entirely agreed with me also in all I said in favour of our adhering to the same principles of policy which had prompted us to conclude the late peace; of the undesirableness of war, and of the true policy of Great Britain in her present circumstances. Alas! I think I see "*bella, horrida bella,*" in prospect, and the chief obstacle in the way appears to me to be the state of the French expedition in St. Domingo, and the bar which war might oppose to Buonaparte's sending over fresh reinforcements. Hearing on every side remonstrances which have a warlike aspect, it forces itself on my mind, that we have shown ourselves an ungrateful, profane people, and I fear God will have a controversy with us, and is about to make us suffer a part (but how heavy a load may that part imply) of the punishment we have justly merited at His hands. Alas! alas! my heart sinks within me when I look forward to the idea of the renewal of hostilities. But may a gracious God give us strength to bear whatever He may impose on us. I would humbly cultivate that peace which may keep my heart, and fill it with love, and confidence, and submission. My dear Babington, I could run on for hours, but I must stop. Farewell, my dear friend; may the best blessings be the portion of you and yours! O,

my dear friend, how little will all worldly things appear when we get into the eternal world !

Kindest remembrances,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P.S. But how shall I tell you, that I have ascertained that the French government have actually engaged some English ships to carry over troops and stores to St. Domingo — whether to serve also as stiflers or drowners I know not?

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

London, March 22, 1803.

My dear Muncaster,

I am sure if you had known the state of my *res domestica*, you would have been deeply interested for us. I really forget whether or not I have written to you since the illness of our dear little girl; she has been at the point of death, and was twice thought to be actually gone. But, I thank God, she has been spared to us ; and though you would scarcely recognise your old merry little friend under the pale and sober countenance she now wears, yet I trust she is gradually recovering. Such incidents are highly salutary, however painful. I can feel for you, my dear Muncaster, when I write thus. I fear my letter may cause your wound, though an old one, to open and bleed afresh.

I thank God I have been by degrees returning to my ordinary state of health and strength, though at this moment I am reclined on a sofa, owing to an accidental, and, I trust, temporary attack. As to politics, where shall I begin, or what shall I say? I verily believe Addington to be a man of good understanding, of a generous temper, of pure intentions, and of far more religion than almost any of our public men. But there is a sad want of energy. I have pointed out to him many and grievous abuses, yet they are not rectified. Some of them would make your blood boil. This very day, to my surprise and concern, I heard that a set of men, of whose shameful misconduct I had been informed through a friend of yours as well as other channels, instead of being turned out with disgrace, as I expected, were going to have 200*l.* per annum added to their salaries. Cobbett is a foul-mouthed fellow; but there is too much foundation for his charges on the state of the navy, dockyards, &c. Then our poor black clients. O my dear Muncaster, my heart bleeds to think of their wrongs, and of the insulting compassion, for such I feel it, which has been expressed by those who suffer them to be still torn from their country, and all that is dear to them, and to undergo all the abominations of that detested system.

You have heard that the account of Buonaparte's language and demeanour towards Lord Whitworth, at his wife's drawing-room, was really true. His hatred of Great Britain knows no bounds; and I fear, from what I hear, that there is in France in general a rooted hostility to this country. All agree in this who have had

an opportunity of knowing the sentiments of the people of that country. Yet had we but an administration who, by a truly popular course, beginning with the king on the throne, would call forth the public spirit of this country, humanly speaking, I should have little fear. But—well, don't let me infect you with my gloom. We have deserved to be chastised; and the way in which Providence commonly punishes nations is by leaving them to the effects of their own vices and follies. Farewell, my dear Muncaster. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster and your daughters. Mrs. W. cordially joins.

Yours ever sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

DR. PERCIVAL, M.D. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Manchester, June 24, 1803.

My dear Sir,

By the particular desire of Mr. Brougham, a young advocate now at the Scotch bar, and a very intimate friend of my son, I write to request the honour of your acceptance of "An Enquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers," in two vols. 8vo. He has directed his booksellers, Messrs. Longman and Rees, to send you a copy of the work; and it is my pleasing office to introduce it to your notice. Mr. B. is a man of extraordinary talents and acquirements. He is descended from an ancient family in Cumberland; but his father

having married a niece of the late Dr. Robertson, the historian, was induced to settle at Edinburgh, and to educate his son in the university there. Our Royal Society have lately elected him a member on account of several communications, which display a profound knowledge of mathematics and physics. His prevailing taste, however, is for polite science. And I trust you will find in the volumes which I have announced to you great accuracy and extent of research, as well as acuteness of investigation. You will be gratified in observing that he adopts your ideas concerning the negro slave system; and perhaps will be astonished — at least I was so — at the detection of many gross misrepresentations in the writings of the late Mr. Edwards.

* * * * * *

Is there any chance of your making another excursion to Lancashire? To see you again under this roof would afford the most cordial satisfaction to, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged
Friend and Servant,
THOS. PERCIVAL.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Broomfield, July 4, 1803.

My dear Muncaster,

We want you here sadly. There is a melancholy torpor, partly the result, I hope, of a sense of

security, but partly, also, I fear, of a still worse sensation. I am sure you would concur with me as to the steps proper to have been pursued: they should have been calculated to give an electric shock to the body politic; whereas now, six weeks after, we are debating on the detail of the proposition made by ministers; and some months, I fear, will elapse before the army of reserve will be sufficiently adroit to be with justice to themselves and to their name opposed to the veterans of France. We have had one or two singular debates. A Col. Crawford has given us some military lectures.

George Hammond, the Under Secretary of State, dined with me on Saturday. A messenger came down to him in the afternoon, who was just arrived from France. He had seen Buonaparte at Boulogne on Friday morning. One of our frigates being supposed to know he was there, came as close as possible, and fired into the town, too far off, I believe, to do any execution. Buonaparte ordered the artillery of the place to be pointed against her; and the powder being bad, and the discharge not answering his wishes, he became so furious as to tear off, with his own hands, the epaulettes from the officer's shoulders.

Well, my friend, it is my only comfort that all human affairs are in higher hands than ours; and we are assured that all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Be it our care to secure this, and then we may exclaim, in the triumphant language of the Psalmist (Psalm xlvi.). Farewell, my friend; I wish I

were with you: my mouth waters to think of your rocks and mountains, and shady walks.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

Kindest remembrances.

*I will give you a toast, — "The Right Honourable George Tierney." ! ! !

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO ROBERT CHAMBERS, ESQ.

Broomfield, July 11, 1803.

My dear Sir,

It was with no small vexation, that, on my way to church yesterday morning, the thought suddenly shot into my mind, that I had neglected the execution of my engagement to furnish you with some hints for your northern tour.

What with the defence of the country, what with the tax bills, the time I can work is so engrossed, that I should feel myself scarcely warranted to steal away from these occupations the few moments necessary for writing to you, but for my promise. I hope this will find you before you quit Derbyshire, in which case I recommend your proceeding to Sheffield, and seeing the manufactures of the place. I will enclose a note to a gentleman in business there, who will show you the lions of the place; thence through Rotherham, where you should see

the iron-works, to Barnsley and Wakefield, seeing by the way Lord Strafford's beautiful, and Lord Fitzwilliam's magnificent seats; thence to Leeds, where if you can be on Tuesday, you will be well recompensed by seeing the Cloth Market. If you can spare time, it will be worth your while to go to Halifax, and see a beautiful valley near it, Todmorden. Lord Harewood's seat, a little north of Leeds, is one of the finest in the kingdom, and the grounds exquisitely beautiful; thence to Ripon, see Studley and Hackfall, and through Masham, Middleham, Askrigg to Sedbergh, and Kendal. In Wensley Dale, soon after Middleham, is the beautiful waterfall Aysgarth Force, and two or three extraordinary waterfalls, especially Hardraw Scar, five miles on your way from Askrigg towards Sedbergh. You will here see a peculiar sort of country and of inhabitants — multitudes of small yeomen. From Kendal either to Fellfoot, if you have a mind to see the whole of Windermere, or to Bowness, if half will satisfy you. I advise you to fix your Windermere head-quarters either at Low Wood or Bowness; not Ambleside for convenience; but, perhaps, Miss Pritchard's hospitality and agreeable manners will offer you (and make you gladly accept the offer) a residence in her most delicious habitation. It is an earthly paradise.

From Windermere, cross the mountain Kirkstone into Patterdale, and the whole length of Ullswater. There, my friend Mr. Clarkson will, I am sure, point out to you any beauties in his neighbourhood, which a fuller acquaintance with the scenes around may have brought to his knowledge. Nine miles from Penrith is

Nunnery, a place seldom seen, but the sweetest in its way in England. A sort of pocket edition of scenery, which you usually find only in the majesty of gigantic proportions — thence to Keswick, where you must stay two or three days, and especially take a round through Borrowdale and Buttermere, and Crummock Water, and through Newland's Vale; also, you must go the whole road from Keswick to Ambleside; it is the most delightful ride in England. If you are a mountaineer, cross Hard Knot and Wrynose to Lord Muncaster's, who, from what I will immediately write to him, will receive you with his characteristic hospitality; and from Muncaster, if you really have a mind to see the interior of the country, go by Wastdale, and over the Stychead into Borrowdale, and thence to Keswick again; it is the very deliciæ of mountain scenery. If you prefer a different order, you may reverse the arrangement, but do not omit seeing these lovely scenes: I have myself explored them all. If you do not go into Scotland, I would advise you to go by Appleby and Greta Bridge, (visit Morritt, to whom I will give you, if you tell me you will pass by him, a few lines,) and the banks of the Tees to Durham, and thence to Newcastle. Cocken is between Durham and Newcastle, a romantic place, rivalling Hackfall, as I have been told. The military road from Carlisle to Newcastle is the most dreary, comfortless length of fifty miles (at least was twenty-five years ago) I ever remember. I will enclose a note, which on showing to certain persons in certain places, will obtain for you civilities; but I need not tell you that men of business have not much time to spare for social intercourse.

While engaged in writing to you, I have been transported in idea to the lovely scenes I have been naming, but how lively a contrast is my present actual situation! I am toiling during the day, in a hot, dusty, tumultuous city; and for the secure tranquillity of the peaceful vales of Westmoreland — busy preparations, but too tardy, I fear, for the reception of our inveterate enemy. All who know any thing of the matter are alarmed, I find, in proportion to their knowledge. We certainly are not prepared for an invasion, and our people scarcely seem aware of the exertion which the crisis requires. I hope you will endeavour, wherever you go, to make people acquainted with their real danger, and with the necessity of the most vigorous efforts. If our zeal in defending our country were but half as great as that of the enemy in attacking it, humanly speaking there would be no room for fear; but I often dread lest God should employ Buonaparte as His scourge for the punishment of an ungrateful and dissipated people, who, blessed with unequal privileges, are too little regardful of Him who bestows them. I must economise my paper not to exceed an ounce. I heartily wish you health and happiness, and am,

My dear Sir,
Ever affectionately yours,
W. Wilberforce.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO WM. HEY, ESQ. LEEDS.

Broomfield, July 13, 1803.

My dear Sir,

There is no levee to-day, but my colleague and I will present your address as soon as we are able. I am glad to see the spirit of the people beginning to rise. Though it is my decided opinion that the war was engaged in by our administration most unnecessarily and unwisely; yet, now that we are engaged in it, every effort must be used. The most enlightened and experienced in naval and military matters in this part of the world are most alarmed; and we all (I mean mankind in general, and especially my own circle of friends) believe that government have been sadly dilatory. How many weeks have elapsed since they, who chose their own time, began the war, yet we have only just passed the bill which is to provide an army to defend us. I fear we have scarce 20,000 effective infantry in all Great Britain; and the measure which is to call forth the irregular force, the voluntary zeal of the country, is not yet brought forward. I sometimes fear lest it should be the will of God to punish our forgetfulness and ingratitude by the instrumentality of His scourge, Buonaparte, and that, for this end, as He commonly executes His purposes by natural means, He has infatuated our counsels, and infused a fatal torpor into our political body; yet I think, the greatly increased proportion of truly religious young men who are coming forward are a token for

good; a sign that though we may be scourged, we shall not be finally abandoned to the fury of our enemies.

Whatever I think of the grounds of the war, or of the manner in which preparations have been hitherto made for it, you will not doubt of my being careful not to say any thing publicly which may tend to damp the ardour or repress the efforts of my countrymen. I wish to assist in the only way wherein I can be useful, in rousing them to a sense of the indispensable necessity of exertion, and to a conviction of its being alike the duty and the interest of every member of the community, from the highest to the lowest, to devote his utmost energies to the public service. I have been considering where and how I can be most useful. In acting as a soldier in any capacity, or in any department of active exertion, I should be worse than useless. My wretched performances would not only disgrace my own character, and prevent my doing good in any other way, but would dispirit others, and damp their ardour. I cannot ride a mile; I cannot, most days, walk half an one, without bringing on an attack of illness; and exposure to the rain for three minutes would infallibly send me to bed in a fever. Under these circumstances, I yet am placed in an important public station, and when parliament has risen, it occurs to me sometimes, that I might possibly be of some use in Yorkshire in stirring up the spirit and correcting the erroneous conceptions of my countrymen. I might probably be able, if it were proper, to hire a house for my wife and children, and making that my head quarters, might visit several different parts of the country, as circumstances might require; yet, when

I consider my weakly frame, and that any fatigue (what no one in health would esteem such) quite disables me, I am led to believe that, during the recess, it would be more proper for me to remain in quiet, attending to my health and my family, and also using my pen in support of the common cause. Do be so kind as to weigh this question well, and to give me your honest counsel. You will consider it as a Christian, and I therefore put it to you with the more satisfaction, and shall receive your advice with the more deference.

Alas! my dear sir, these are times when the father and the husband must feel alarmed when he places before him the possible evils to which his wife and children may be exposed. Did you ever see Denon's travels? they exhibit a faint sketch of the treatment we might reasonably expect if the French should invade our peaceful dwellings. But what an unspeakable comfort is it to reflect that all events are under the guidance of our all-merciful Father and Redeemer, and that He has promised all things shall work together for good to them that love God; yet my nature, I own, not formed for these turbulent scenes, turns in idea to that more tranquil situation wherein one might enjoy the sweets of domestic comfort and religious retirement. Pray for me, my dear sir. All who fear God ought now to set apart a time for prayer for their country. I have been sadly pressed for time, and must break off.

Yours, ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Broomfield, July 23, 1803.

My dear Friend,

I did not get my letters to-day till it was so late that I could scarcely read, much less answer, them before the departure of the post. It is striking; but my own thoughts had been led to flow in the same channel as yours, though not with so strong a current, by my having heard accidentally from a foreign merchant, that subsequent to the conquest of Hanover the French were bringing thither 40,000 new troops. I mentioned it to Addington. As you truly say, what a dreadful responsibility is, perhaps, storing up for him.

You would have been enraptured with Pitt's speech last night: so much good sense, so much spirit, tempered with so much judgment, and, I believe I may truly say, so much military talent; contriving at once to rouse animation and inspire caution, to infuse the heroic spirit, and to urge the adoption of every rational precaution. And the best of it was, its being pretty evident, from the way in which it carried along the sense of parliament, that the advice must be followed. I am called away. If I can I will resume the pen; if not, it may be satisfactory to say that I will make another effort to impress Addington with the idea you suggest. They have drawn away all the troops from Yorkshire for the defence of London, and I fear the sea-guard is not what it should be.

Farewell! — kind remembrances.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. BURGH, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

York, August 8, 1803.

My dear Wilberforce,

Is administration gone stark staring mad that they recall the bill for arming the nation, and suspend the execution of it in its present well understood state? Do they mean only to distract the people, and make them not come forward? Is not the torpor which their own somnolency is so calculated to infuse sufficient for them, without rendering it a general doubt what each man ought to do?

As common newspaper reports and conjectures are not now sufficient to satisfy the anxiety incident to the time, you will greatly oblige me by any information you may be kind enough to impart. We stand upon an edge, and every atom that tends to maintain or overturn our balance is important. In Ireland I trust the awakened vigilance of government will tend to the restoration of tranquillity, and, if our fleet be attended to, I should even hope to its continuance; but if we surrender the sea to Spain and her necessitated tricks and hypocrisy, and at the same time submit to the insults of France at Gibraltar, nay, yield the benefit of that fortress to our enemies, and leave the Gut to their superior force, we may then take leave of even the means of defence, and at once submit to the fortune of the First Consul. The public is more frighted by the Cockpit than the

Tuilleries. Every happiness attend you and yours. My hand-writing will evince my haste.

My dear W.,

I am ever most affectionately yours,

W. BURGH.

BISHOP PORTEUS TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Fulham, August 10, 1803.

Dear Sir,

I very sincerely lament with you that no fast-day has yet been appointed. Before I left London to go into the north I mentioned it to the Archbishop, and understood from him that it was his intention to propose it without delay. What has occasioned the delay I know not, as I am but just returned from the north, and, indeed, am never consulted in matters of this nature, which are exclusively under the direction of the Archbishop.

The only thing that occurs to me is, that our fast-days have, I think, been always in the winter, generally after the meeting of parliament, when the town is full, and when both houses of parliament can attend divine service at the Abbey and St. Margaret's, which in the recess they cannot do. I do not at present recollect a single instance of a fast-day when the Houses were not sitting. It might, therefore, be thought more consonant to ancient usage to wait till the parliament met in the winter, and in the mean while, a prayer, composed for the purpose, is now actually read every Sunday, besides

the usual one in time of war and tumults. Whether I am right in this conjecture I know not; but at all events, I shall write to the Archbishop on the subject, and request him to take the matter into immediate consideration. He is, I believe, at present at Tunbridge Wells. The order must come from the privy council, but is first mentioned to the king by the archbishop.

I am, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

B. LONDON.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO CAPTAIN ——.

Sandleford, near Newbury, August 31, 1803.

My dear Sir,

I have very lately received from you a letter, dated Cork, and am much affected with the account you give of the lower Irish. The state in which Ireland has been suffered to remain for above a century is in my mind most disgraceful to the character of this country. We found them barbarous, enslaved by gross superstition, and attached to the enemies of our crown and kingdom, and yet no efforts have been used to convert, civilise, instruct, and attach them. Above all, the non-residence of the clergy till, I believe, of late, when I hope it has been amended, has been such, that there have been extensive districts of country without a resident minister. I am happy, however, to hear that there are

now in the church in Ireland many truly active, pious, zealous ministers.

My dear sir, I have much to say to you on naval subjects: I hope that you will carefully observe all that passes. Great as are the services which you may render to your country by defending her against her foreign enemies, yet if you can be instrumental in effecting such an improvement of our naval system as shall gain the affections of our seamen, and, perhaps, permanently improve their character and increase their happiness by rendering them more domestic, you will render a service far greater, and in its consequences more durable. Any man the least acquainted with human nature must know, that to make a crew orderly and obedient you ought to increase their respect for the captain, and try to enlarge his influence and confirm his authority. Yet, from what I hear on all sides, this plain principle has been universally forgotten. I do not wonder that in your last letter (which by the way I have just received) you say you have a long winter to look forward to. May it please God to bless you, and to enable you to discharge your arduous duties to your own satisfaction, and to the benefit of your country.

Your life on shipboard abounds with difficulties and temptations; yet I have often thought, that when a man rises in the navy to your rank, or rather so high as to have his cabin to himself, it must be a situation far less unfavourable in a religious view than many others. He may enjoy a good deal of retirement. When he chooses he may lock his door, and commune with his own heart in his chamber, and be

still. Of all the means of improvement I take prayer to be by far the most effectual, especially when it is accompanied with reading the Scriptures, and praying over them. God has promised in His word that He will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him — that He will give them wisdom — that He will guide them in the way wherein they should go — and when, relying on His fidelity, we fall on our knees before Him, and pour out our hearts in prayer, claiming His precious promises made to us through Jesus Christ, we are assured that He is more ready to hear us than we are to pray to Him.

I am aware of the danger to which you are exposed from vicious companions; but you must be aware of this. You will of course pray to be protected from it, and to be preserved safe from the contagion of sin. I am sure you will not require an apology for a mark of real friendship which I am going to show you, by mentioning, that when you were last with me, I with pain observed you take the name of God in vain. It may be difficult not to be tainted with this practice, so prevalent, I fear, both in our army and navy; yet I remember Sir Charles Middleton told me he was able to repress the horrid practice of swearing on board the ship he commanded. I should have told you of this at the time, but for my not having a favourable opportunity. O, my dear sir, how shall we in the next world feel obliged to those who in this may have promoted our spiritual well-being, though perhaps at the time we were not fully sensible of the value of the service which was rendered us. Good offices of this kind will last for ever; and I can con-

ceive, that in that future blessed world in which, I doubt not, friends will meet and know each other, and dwell in the enjoyment of the highest and purest happiness from social intercourse, many will often talk to each other of the obligations they owe to those who, while on earth, were instrumental in helping them forward to heaven, and that mutually to acknowledge these, under circumstances which will make them feel and know the degree of service which has been rendered, will often call forth the affections, and warm the hearts of the purified spirits in glory. It should be our endeavour, while we continue in this world, to become more and more qualified to take our place in that blessed society. This is to be effected by our obtaining more and more of the sanctifying influences of God's Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is to be obtained by earnest, frequent, and persevering prayer, made in the name and for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Intercessor, and by taking great care not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and tempt Him to withdraw from us, by living in the practice of any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty.

Many would call this a sermon rather than a letter; but in writing to you I pour forth my thoughts as they flow on in their natural course, and I am persuaded you would not have me check them. Before I conclude, let me ask if I can send you any books which will be acceptable to you for your own perusal, and also whether it might do good among the sailors to send you a parcel of religious tracts, &c., mixing the entertaining with the serious (like our excellent friend Mrs. H. More's), to be distributed among them, or whether you want Bibles or

Testaments. When you answer this, say, also, how they could be conveyed to you in safety. Farewell, my dear sir.

I am always, with sincere esteem and regard,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

Bath Easton, September 4, 1803.

My dear Stephen,

My morning has been stolen from me by a prosing visiter, who having volunteered his services about getting us a house, has an additional claim on our civility, but who has the faculty of being very long winded —addicted to the narrative, historical, &c. Ask my sister about a certain compilation of letters from Venice, which used to be a subject of mirth between us, and she will not differ much from me in her account of the writer, except that the addition of 19 years to his age has rendered his pace in talking more tardy, without being less circuitous or for a less duration.

Kindest remembrances.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD MUNCASTER.

Near Bath, September 28, 1803.

My dear Muncaster,

I know too well the friendly interest you take in all that concerns me and mine, not to be sure that you are desirous of learning the result of my Bath expedition, and of hearing whether the waters, together with a life of comparative quiet, have healed the wounds and filled up the cracks produced by so long a winter cruise as our last. I certainly have received benefit from our residence at this place already; but I have had a fresh attack of my complaint, which forbids my reckoning too much on any supposed amendment. Fearfully and wonderfully are we made. When we consider the curious and complicated mechanism of our bodily structure, we see reason rather to wonder at its ever continuing to perform its proper functions at all, than to be surprised at its being often out of order. Have you read Paley's Natural Theology? To a mind already pious, it will, I hope, be serviceable, by multiplying his recollections of his Supreme Benefactor, by accustoming him to see God in every part of his curious frame, and in all nature around him. But the view of the divine character which is there exhibited is very erroneous and very mischievous. His wisdom, power, and goodness, are indeed enforced by many new proofs, but another grand attribute of the Supreme Being, as He is represented to us in the Scriptures, I mean His justice or His holiness, is entirely overlooked or neglected. The practical consequences of this

error are most pernicious: it tends to flatter men into a false estimate of their own character, of the claims of God on them, and therefore of the necessity and value of the Redeemer and Mediator between God and man. How have I been drawn on? I think you will see the train of my ideas.

Letters from London say that government cannot persuade themselves that any attempt will be made on England, but that Ireland will be the subject of the meditated blow. But for the limitation of the number of volunteers in the very face of all objections, we should ere now have had 700,000 or 800,000 men in arms, or perhaps a million. Still more, the military spirit which would have been diffused would have filled the ranks of the army and caused it to overflow. You have not told me whether you have read a Cursory View of Parties by a near Observer. A most abusive, mischievous, and ill-judged pamphlet, which tries to divide at a time when every honest man tries to heal all differences. You must read it. Kind remembrances to Lady Muncaster. Since I came here I have become better acquainted than ever before with my little ones. You will understand and smile at this. Farewell! Believe me, my dear Muncaster,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO ZACHARY MACAULAY, ESQ.

Near Bath, September 30, 1803.

My dear Sir,

While I must call you an extravagant fellow for employing the coach instead of the waggon, which latter (the flying waggon, as it is humorously termed) is but three days on the wing, I yet am bound to thank you for your kind attention to my commission.* It is observed by some writer, that there is in every man a certain vein or thread of shabbiness, which will sometimes show itself in opposition to the general strain of the character. Will you say, that I furnish an illustration of this principle, when I am thus jealous of coach-hire?

Be it as it may, the odd shillings may be better employed than in clogging the wheels and increasing the load of the mail-coach. Call it feeling for the horses, and so dignify my economy. However, I am sure you will not require any apology. I am interrupted, and must break off.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

* Mr. Macaulay's commission had been to procure for him "a copy of the last edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica," as a present to a friend.

RALPH CREYKE, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

[Docketted, "Ralph Creyke, Esq. — A true picture of an English country gentleman, the very cement of our society."]

Marton, November 22, 1803.

My dear Sir,

You ask me how we go on in our part of the country? I answer, very well as to professions and good intentions; but we are rather slack in exertions. The danger seems to be at a great distance from this shore; and the price of labour in this thinly inhabited district is so very high that a moderate subscription will not induce men to give up their time and prepare themselves for service. Government has been very niggard in their allowances; and it cannot reasonably be expected that country gentlemen, upon whose loins the burden of taxes lies most heavily, will expend much money. They really have it not.

At one time our spirit was brisk, and all was upon the alert; but Lord Hobart's letter, of the third of August I think it was, checked many gentlemen who had made, or intended to make, offers of service, and government not having a sufficient number of arms to issue checked the ardour of those who had engaged. I have heard much talk of the advantages of a pike, but the firelock is the only weapon to put into the hands of a gentleman soldier. There are a great many pikes in store at Hull, but I rather think that there has not been a requisition for any. Only half the number of arms necessary has been issued, and in many instances they have not been

accompanied by accoutrements, although the whole has been promised some time ago; and Lord Carlisle, in a letter to me this morning, says, that he was assured that the supplies were shipped off for Hull on the 27th of last month.

If you inquire how I come to know these things, I am happy to inform you that I feel myself young again, and have ventured to take the command of seven hundred and twenty men, called the Herford and Derwent Dale Volunteers. After I have been croaking about the expense attending the service, you will fear that I am in the jaws of ruin; but I am nobly supported by Mr. Langley and Mr. St. Quintin, who clothe the men; and my neighbour Mr. Osbaldeston is lieutenant-colonel. The men are at great distances from each other. They extend along the edge of the Wolds, and in the valley between Hunmanby, and almost to Malton. You know that we are not thickly planted in this country. Grimston has two troops of cavalry in Holderness, and Bethell two companies of infantry. At Bridlington, Colonel Pitts has three companies, one of which is artillery. Then we make up the line of defence. On the Wolds, Sir Mark Sykes has six troops of cavalry. Grimston of Neswick has two companies in the neighbourhood of Driffield. Denison of Kilnwick has five or six companies at Pocklington. Mr. Maxwell Constable has a troop of cavalry at Everingham; and Mr. Thompson of Escrick has six or seven companies near him. You must know the force at Beverley and Hull. So you know what you may trust

in if you make your friends in the East Riding a visit this Christmas.

You will find me busy in another employment, for I am lieutenant of this division, and am plagued almost to death with orders about beacons, pioneers, and waggons. I have given no directions about driving the country, because if it is attempted, the loss is certain, and the attempt may begin upon a false alarm; and in this country it is impossible to starve an enemy. The horses shall be taken care of, and moved away with as many women and children on their backs as they can carry. Added to this, I am studying the Income Act, and am preparing to perform the part of a commissioner. We mustered the company of performers last Saturday, and make our début in a month's time; but I fear that the piece will not be received with unbounded applause; not that the piece is badly written or badly got up, but the critics will grumble. You may attribute this dramatic sentence to Mr. Topham having been one of the party.

I have now, I think, told you all the military and all the civil news from this corner. My children and grandchildren are all well, and I am well myself; and I dread nothing in this contest, if our enemy will venture within reach. The expense is the only deadly weapon.

With best regards to Mrs. Wilberforce and your family, and every good wish,

I am yours most truly,

RALPH CREYKE.

In the Christmas recess I may hope to hear from you.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO SIR J. SINCLAIR, BART.

London, December 16, 1803.

My dear Sir John,

You will of course suppose that *quicquid mortaliter evenit.* I must say I have given you reason for such a surmise; but though I could make out a good defence of myself against the charge of inattention in not sooner answering your most interesting communication, I will not occupy to so little purpose any of your time and my own; suffice it to assure you that my silence has in no degree arisen from inattention.

Your inclosure from America afforded me the highest pleasure; certainly a very different notion has prevailed with regard to the writer's sentiments. We in this island are sadly neglectful of foreigners. I have often thought that a minister would act wisely in employing some competent person (and such an one, though not the product of every market, would be found if proper encouragement were held out, for in men as in manufactures the supply accommodates itself to the demand,) to study our relations and points of contact with foreign countries, their leading characteristics, &c., and to suggest the proper measures and expedients for conciliating or otherwise influencing, as the case might require. The ignorance of foreign countries, their chief men, their opinions, manners, prejudices, &c. is beyond measure great; and would be astonishing to any who, not having had the opportunity, like you and I, of personal observation, are not aware that nothing, or at least little else,

is attended to, but that which is made the subject of discussion in parliament. This is one of the bad effects of our most excellent constitution. Your correspondent's letter led me into this train of thinking. Our statesmen would do well to cultivate the good will of America; her friendship may be eminently beneficial to us.

We will talk about Ireland when we meet. Such an inquiry as that which you suggest would supply the only sound and sure grounds for future measures. But I fear the general prejudices against its being conducted by parliamentary commissioners would be insuperable; but if so, why should not a company of private individuals set on foot the investigation? Would it be impracticable to procure such a statistical account of Ireland as that which you have furnished of Scotland, superadding certain classes of topics on which it would be necessary, for our object, to obtain information. How strange it is, yet it is undeniably true, that we know the state of Ireland less authentically than that of almost any country in Europe. I was assured three years ago by the best informed man in Irish affairs that I know, that A. Young's travels were even now the best storehouses of Irish information. Do turn this in your mind. You have shown that little obstacles do not stop you; you cannot take a course where your labours are more called for, or would be more useful. I have often thought of accompanying any other measures with one founded on the policy of three of the greatest characters of English history, Queen Elizabeth, Oliver Cromwell, and William III. I would annually apply the sum of a

million sterling to the office of settling a certain number of a particular description of the Irish in Canada, or some other country, with their own consent. The mere suggestion of this kind will bring before you the train of ideas which follows. My paper admonishes me to conclude, and I remain,

My dear Sir John,

Your faithful servant,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P. S. I thought I might mention to Mr. Pitt the contents of your letter from America. He was of course much pleased with it.

We are all in high spirits from Lord Moira's compliment to your Edinburgh volunteers; and though I suppose somewhat must be abated in consideration of its being addressed to themselves, whom he would naturally wish to animate, yet it really weighs heavily even in a hydrostatical balance.

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's College, Epiphany, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I cannot help giving you a line upon having received yours this morning, and plainly perceiving from the contents that you must have had a deal of concern on your mind again.

Alas! alas! this poor dear little one, that looks so

like your deceased mother. May I really hope the worst is over! It is the most affecting thing in the world to see a child one loves ill; and I find it impossible not to love these little ones, if I live with them and see their pretty ways of going on. Yet what a deal of art, and sometimes not of amiable art do they show! But then they overpower one absolutely by their thousand little affectionate tricks and locks. Depend on it there is a superintending Providence that peculiarly guards them.

Edwards* is, indeed, a deep hand. There is a world of thinking sometimes in a few pages. I studied that book on affections long ago with very great care, and wrote a few notes on some passages where I thought him not so clear as usual, or perhaps where I do not quite agree with him, which in general I do very much. To live the life of faith is the thing after all; and a hard matter it is.

My poor heart is fuller than anybody knows on earth. I am sadly dissatisfied and sadly hampered; I know not where to turn or what to say; but it is not from want but from abundance of matter. I have been trying plans that are new in some respects to me. I mean practical plans. What will be the result I know not. I am not without hope; but this is all I can say. One thing I can add, I have the fullest conviction of the way; I see it as if marked with a sunbeam — blessed be God! Moreover I find, that whenever I can act for even a short time in any measure up to the principles which I know to be right, I succeed so far.

* Edwards on Religious Affections.

There is, indeed, a secret in religion, and this secret is with them that fear Him.

Every doubt about knotty points vanishes in proportion as I have a disposition to be active, and as I support a real practical life of faith.

I preached on Christmas-day in our chapel, and got a good deal of cold.

Yours affectionately,

ISAAC MILNER.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO WILLIAM GRAY, ESQ.

Broomfield, January 9, 1804.

My dear Sir,

My silence has really not arisen from my being in any degree indifferent to the subject of your letter, which, from the account which it gave of the family you mention, would of itself have interested me, had I not been before disposed to feel towards them the genuine emotions of friendship. I rejoice in learning from your letter that they are making a progress in the best direction. Alas! my dear Sir, how difficult is it to do this — how *natural* to us are declensions — how laborious, how difficult is it to advance or even to keep our station! It is the discovery of this by painful experience which tends to produce in us a deep humility, a sense of our own weakness, and a practical acquaintance with our Almighty Saviour. It is highly gratify-

ing to see an undeniable improvement in our older friends — to see that period of life wherein we naturally begin to sicken of the business and bustle of that world, allotted to its best use, the preparing for that future state which is at hand. Yet it is still more delightful to witness the manifest marks of the Divine hand in those who are still in the bloom of youth, entering perhaps into life, and likely to serve God and their fellow-creatures with the full unimpaired vigour of their faculties, and to devote a whole life to his service.

We may indulge this pleasing prospect in the case of several young men who are now entering into the world, and it is one of the very best and most encouraging symptoms in the case of our body politic, that it has pleased God to give us such highly favoured instruments, which I hope we may justly construe into an assurance that He has not yet cast us off as a nation, justly as we have provoked His displeasure by our past ingratitude, and profane levity, and self-sufficiency.

In respect to the particular instance in which our friends wish for my good offices, I can only state what I have often had occasion to communicate to particular friends since I have held my parliamentary situation, viz., that my principle in using any influence I may possess in the disposal of ecclesiastical preferment is, to exert it so as, in my judgment, to do the most good to the souls of men. This is a short way of putting it, but it includes all the rest. I am bound by it to espouse the cause of the minister, whoever he may be, whom I believe likely to be most extensively useful, and not to suffer the temporal interests of a single individual, and

still less my own personal affections, to be weighed against the eternal interests of many.

These, my dear Sir, are principles of conduct of which I shall not be ashamed to give account in the hour of death and at the day of judgment, and no others will then stand the test. They have often, however, been the occasion of my suffering no little pain, because they have compelled me to refuse the requests of those whom I have tenderly loved — of those to whom I have felt myself bound by the ties of gratitude. But while our friends will themselves feel the force of these principles, I trust they need not oblige me to dismiss the hope of some time or other being the instrument of promoting their wishes, not most likely by obtaining this particular preferment, but possibly some other. I am grieved, however, to state that I find very strong prejudices in the minds of the generality of those who possess, or who are likely to possess the great ecclesiastical patronage of the country; but God can take care of His own church, and as it has pleased Him of late to raise up many labourers, so I would humbly trust that He will provide for them admission and the means of usefulness. Let all our prayers be poured out for this with increasing earnestness. It is painful to be supposed hostile to that church we most tenderly and solicitously love; but such has been the lot of better men than ourselves, of those whose love has burned with a brighter and purer flame.

I must finish this long letter which I have been forced to write by snatches. You are indebted for its being

concluded to-day to my waiting for a friend with whom I have business. With kind regards to all your own household, I remain always,

Yours very sincerely,
W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

Broomfield, February 21, 1804.

My dear Friend,

Though I have not written to you, you have often been in our thoughts and mouths. We heard with concern of your having suffered much pain : — Baxter pathetically exclaims, "After all I must say, Ah, this vile body !" It is, however, an unspeakable consolation under all trials of every sort to reflect, that they do not happen by chance, nor merely from the effect of general laws which, in their gigantic rotations, crush a few thousands more or less of the insignificant beings who chance to be under them : such a way of talking about general laws is a most saddening system, and of an atheistical complexion, though many have embraced it who have been the farthest in the world from atheism. How much more healing is it to consider that all which befals is specifically and individually ordained for us by Him who combines infinite goodness with Almighty wisdom and power, who afflicts not His creatures needlessly, much less those who fear and love Him, and wait on Him, and who has assured us that all shall finally work

together for our good. I shall not apologize for pouring forth to you all this common-place stuff. In truth it is these common-place positions that are one's daily bread — one's support and comfort.

How we are again and again reminded and awakened to seriousness. If all fails of its purpose, as there is much cause to fear it will, I almost tremble for the issue. Such formidable preparations without, and levity and presumption so much more formidable within, make me fear lest God should resolve to chastise us severely by that scourge which has before been used for the purposes of his vengeance. Have you seen Hall's sermon? — it is a most powerful composition.

I am to bring on again the question of Abolition, and I hear the West Indians themselves begin at length to be alarmed, and — confessedly, from considerations of interest — mean to consent to a suspension of the Slave trade for five years. I can, of course, agree to no such compromise, but I shall rejoice in Africa's having such a breathing time. *Entre nous*, I am engaged in scribbling a tract to be circulated among the members of the House of Commons before the question comes on. Alas! the tales of horror, which once caused so many tears to flow, are all forgotten! I am grown to think that sensibility is one of the most cruel of all qualities.

I was pleased to hear of the Royal sympathy — it really was a promising trait. Alas, poor king! — yet I do believe, that never monarch was more sincerely regretted. He has been very ill, in every way, but there is every reason to hope he is recovering; but surely the reasoning powers must feel the effects of

these rude conflicts. Did you hear of * * *? Well, my friend, let us pray for them, and be thankful for not having been placed in so dangerous a situation. I will inclose the half of a 50*l.* bank note as usual for the schools. If you are in occasional want of a little more at present I could supply it, which I tell you frankly, meaning, of course, that you should treat me frankly. I well know how considerate you are for me; but, somehow, Providence is very kind to me, and I find myself better off in this world's goods than I thought I was, though all is too little for the misery that abounds. Once more, may God preserve and comfort you, and prepare you for all the chances and changes you may have to witness. With kind remembrances, in which Mrs. W., when I tell her I am writing, will most cordially join, to all the ladies,

I am, my dear friend,

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

LORD MUNCASTER TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

April 11, 1804.

* * * * *

My last letters from town tell me that Pitt means to come forth in the most decisive manner; if he does so, I think the Treasury bench will not stand the second shaking, or very little more will make it sink down; and I am quite alarmed at what is also assured me, that the king is really not much better. If this be verily so,

some steps should be taken that there may not be an interruption to the activity of the executive government in case the expected attack takes place, and which cannot now be delayed I should conceive many days even. The Indian wants have operated differently upon my mind and feelings from what I conceive they have done upon all in garrison; and I have endeavoured to trace out the shades of difference between what is acting against us in Europe, and what we are acting against the native powers in Asia. Alas, alas! what is man — how high, how low; how rich, how poor; how abject, how august; how complicate, how wonderful; how passing wonder He who made him such — who centered in our make such wide extremes.

Have you seen the correspondence of Col. Wood with Government in the years 96 and 98. It does not put the conduct of the latter in a happy point of view on account of any great statesman-like qualities among those who directed things at that period. *Apropos*, I have lately had communicated to me, and from excellent authority, a very important anecdote respecting Dundas (tell me when I have mentioned it if it ever reached you), that the battle of Marengo is very much indeed to be put down to Dundas's extraordinary partiality for the late Sir Ralph Abercrombie; for he gave him the command of that force which was afterwards sent to Egypt. To do this, he superseded Sir C. Stewart, and changed the object and direction of that force, which was Genoa, in order to relieve Melas, that he might more immediately have met the first consul on his descending from the defiles of the Alps, when he might have attacked him with,

humanly speaking, certain success; but Dundas's manœuvre for Abercrombie lost so much time, that the expedition was delayed beyond the moment when it could be of service, and Buonaparte had time to arrange himself properly before Melas could leave Genoa and meet him; and upon this it was, that that force was afterwards sent to Egypt. Sir Charles was so hurt that he sent Dundas his letter back again that superseded him in the command. What trifles the most important matters of this world turn upon! — how humbling!!!

Adieu. Our best regards.

Ever, ever yours,

MUNCASTER.

REV. JOHN NEWTON TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

June 5, 1804.

Though I can scarcely see the paper before me, I must attempt to express my thankfulness to the Lord, and to offer my congratulations to you for the success which he has so far been pleased to give to your unwearied endeavours for the abolition of the slave trade, which I have considered as a millstone, sufficient, of itself sufficient, to sink such an enlightened and highly favoured nation as ours to the bottom of the sea.

My thoughts upon the subject have long been gloomy, for I was afraid the mistaken prejudices of the West-India planters would prove an insuperable obstacle; but I have a new proof now of what I always professed

to believe, that to prayer, faith, and patient perseverance all things are possible.

Whether I who am within two months of entering my eightieth year shall live to see the accomplishment of the work, is only known to Him, in whose hands are all our times and ways, but the hopeful prospect of its accomplishment will, I trust, give me daily satisfaction so long as my declining faculties are preserved.

How I long to see you, my dear Mrs. Wilberforce, and your children, but I am 'Miles Emeritus,' and could not reach Broomfield, even if I was sure of finding you at home; but I am often with you in spirit, and I am enabled to hope, that vile and worthless as I always was, and still am, I shall one day meet you before the throne of glory, and join you in songs of praises to Him who loved us, and gave himself for us.

I must leave off; — my eyes fail. May the grace of our God and Saviour be with us all. I am, with much respect and gratitude,

Your affectionate and obliged

JOHN NEWTON.

LORD GRENVILLE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Camelford House, June 27, 1804.

My dear Sir,

Immediately on the receipt of your note* of yesterday I wrote to Lord Harrowby to mention that I had

* Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 178.

not been aware how soon we were likely to have the Abolition Bill in the House of Lords, and that I was extremely desirous of conversing with him, and learning his sentiments on the course to be pursued on the subject. I saw him this morning, and I think he is disposed to take the management of the business into his own hands, which will, I really believe, be much more advantageous for the question than if I were to undertake this task. He will probably have apprized you, either directly, or through Pitt, of the course which I mentioned to him, as appearing to me to be, on the whole, the most conducive to ultimate success: but I told him at the same time with great sincerity, that he might rely on my utmost endeavours and exertions of every kind in any more rapid mode of proceeding, that on consultation with Pitt and you might be deemed practicable. I am to see him to-morrow morning, when I shall probably learn what has been determined; I had fixed to leave town to-morrow morning for the summer, but I have delayed my journey till Friday, in the hope that the first reading of the bill to-morrow will afford me an opportunity of expressing my unalterable adherence to the opinions I have entertained on this subject, ever since I was capable of thinking upon it, and my resolution of giving any assistance in my power to that course, whatever it may be, that the friends of the question shall on the whole deem most expedient. But though I mention the plan I had laid down for myself, I beg you to be persuaded that no arrangement, either of business or pleasure, will prevent my considering it my first object to give my attendance in every stage in which it can be

of the least use in this question; and that, although I do most truly and unaffectedly think that the conduct of the bill will be much more advantageously placed in Lord Harrowby's hands than in mine, yet this sentiment is totally unmixed with any desire of declining any part or share in the business in which yourself, or those who partake in your feelings upon it, think I can be useful. I am truly gratified by the kindness of your letter. The accidents that have interrupted the intimate habits of our early life have produced no variation in my sentiment towards you; and the uniformity of our opinions on the great and leading points to which you refer, forms a bond of mutual regard which I trust and I hope will be as lasting as its principle is solid and secure.

Ever most affectionately and
faithfully yours,
G.

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Deanery, Carlisle, July 25, 1804.

My dear friend,

It may not be amiss that you should know I wrote yesterday to ——.

1. I urged the principle on which you had invariably acted, viz., independence in parliament; and that he who himself acted so disinterestedly knew how to appreciate such a principle; and also, that there was only one way of preserving it, viz., not laying yourself under any ; ations to any administration whatever.

2. That in regard to ecclesiastic patronage you had a conscience to attend to; that you had taken pains to inform yourself in religious matters; and did not dare to be instrumental in preferring indifferent characters, &c. (I expressed myself as *suaviter* as I could); that you were strictly a Church of England man; and that though some would deride your principle, and call it hypocrisy, and many think loosely about it, and very few give it its due weight, you could not possibly act otherwise with a good conscience; that, as a tried man, there was now no ostentation in avowing your principle: —

3. I then said that if I were examined on oath I could say, that the adhering to this principle had cost you great pain, and that you had often done violence to your feelings in cases where relations and best friends, &c. had claims.

4. That he stood foremost as your county friend: that he had gained your heart not only by real services, but by his handsome, frank manner; that on this head I could speak with unqualified certainty, having formed my judgment from what had often dropped in most undisguised moments during many years.

5. That as I know not his brother, I could say nothing of the event, but was sure, if you could not serve him, you would be exceedingly hurt, and infinitely more, if you could believe he deemed you ungrateful.

6. I then advised him to open himself completely to you; to state his claims, and to give the real character of his brother; still, to let his letter be such as you

could show to Mr. Pitt if you thought proper, and he might say any thing that ought to be quite private on another paper.

I have revolved the matter a good deal, and I really do not see but that you are in your duty by doing so much: farther I think you cannot. I see nothing wrong in your showing Mr. Pitt his application to you; and for that reason I also inclose you again his letter to me, as that would show Mr. Pitt the way in which he began this application.

N.B. Your military applicant, whom you desired me to inquire about, is, I find, an indifferent character. He is a strolling player, and has left Carlisle.

Yours, ever affectionately,

J. M.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO CAPTAIN ——, R. N.

[His Majesty's Ship ——, off Brest.]

Broomfield, July 30, 1804.

My dear Sir,

As you are so kind as to receive pleasure from my letters, it would hurt me to appear tardy in contributing to your gratification, at a time especially and under circumstances in which you have so much to bear that is of a contrary quality. You are, however, in the path of duty — you are on your post. I use the phrase, as you will accept it, in a higher sense than that which

many in your profession would assign to it. Life has often been compared to a journey, and viewing it in that character, I trust you and I are travelling to the same place, though by different tracks. O, my dear sir, how strange is it that men in general should be so insensible to this most interesting of all considerations! Were any of your comrades to be engaged in an enterprise of the most critical and important nature, which, at the termination of a voyage of uncertain length, was to be productive to them either of lasting wretchedness and infamy, or of durable wealth, and ease, and glory, would they not often talk of the interesting issue? Yet we are all sailing down the stream of life, in a treacherous current too, and one and another going down continually in sight to remind us of our danger, and not a word is spoken — not a thought seems to be bestowed on it. Let us, my dear sir, so number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom. I know not how it happens, but in writing to you, the natural flow of my thoughts always leads me to serious topics. I trust, however, that I need not apologise for this unusual strain; it is a proof that I write to you with the frankness of real regard.

Let me beg you to continue your communications; and I beg also that you will let me know when you want any thing which I can furnish or procure. Do you want more books or tracts? I have long had in view the institution of a plan, on a large scale, of education for the children of seamen who had been many years in His Majesty's service, and I will frankly own to you that, having sometime ago mentioned this, but in vain,

I have seen the establishment for soldier's children set on foot with the more pleasure, because, besides its own intrinsic merit, it would be likely to render it impossible for government to refuse to befriend a similar plan for our naval defenders also. There are some subjects connected with your profession, on which I shall be very glad to talk with you when we have opportunity, and one of the foremost of them is the best means of redressing any grievances of seamen, and of gaining their affection. I must break off. I have a pile of unanswered letters at my elbow, and therefore it has been an effort to finish this, though it may appear so tardy in its arrival. Believe me, ever with cordial esteem and regard,

My dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO RIGHT HON. W. PITT, ESQ.

Lyme, September 14, 1804.

My dear Pitt,

On the day when, in consequence of your suggestion, I called at Lord Camden's office, both he and Cooke were absent. Mr. G. Penn was so obliging as to show me a few of the papers, but the chief of them were taken away by Sullivan to be corrected, or were copying. I, therefore, can form no just judgment of the plan under discussion. But I own if it be what was proposed formerly by Sir Joseph Banks, I fear it is very

questionable in its principle, and very hazardous in the execution. I have, however, requested Lord Camden, by letter, to send me a copy of the plan, and I will consider it impartially and seriously. I am very desirous of seeing it. Lord Camden has mentioned to me another part of the scheme, that of buying slaves for recruiting our black regiments. That their situation as soldiers would be beyond comparison preferable to that of plantation slaves cannot be doubted; but how can we justify buying slaves for that desirable and even humane purpose, when we reflect that the increased demand will produce a proportionately increased supply, and consequently as many more marauding expeditions, acts of individual rapine, injustice, witchcraft, and condemnations, &c., as are necessary for obtaining the requisite number of negroes.

It has occurred to me as extremely probable that Buonaparte will resort to this mode of obtaining a black army for the reduction of St. Domingo, and I should be sorry that we should set him the example. The *vicious principle*, however, constitutes the main objection to this system of recruiting, and I know not how it can be got over. All that I can desire is, that you will give so much of your attention to the subject as to enable you to form a judgment, both on this last scheme and on the main plan, of which I understand it to be a part; I am sure you and I cannot differ in principle; and if you will therefore look into the matter as you really ought (because it will come hereafter into discussion if it be adopted, and you will be regarded as the responsible person), I shall be content. I should be

much obliged to you at any time for a single word to satisfy my anxiety on this subject.

Secondly, you received, I hope, the two papers which Mr. Brougham desired me to give you, the one, a manuscript statement, which the whole number (several hundreds,) of respectable persons in Edinburgh who meant to form a volunteer corps, but were neglected as they thought by Lord Hobart, desired might be laid before you, being solicitous that you, to whom they were devoted (remember this was some time before you were in office), might know that their not coming forward had not proceeded from any defect in their zeal or loyalty. The other of Mr. Brougham's papers was a critique on Lord Lauderdale's late work on National Wealth, and on Lord Chatham's Letters.

Thirdly, you also got, I hope, the Book of Exercises of the Students in Lord Wellesley's college in Calcutta, which the college desired might be presented to his Majesty. They did me the honour (owing, I believe, to my knowing well one of the chief officers of the college,) to ask me to present it, adding, that if I declined, they wished me to give it to Mr. Addington, then prime minister, to be presented to his Majesty by him. From what I know of them, I am sure that *your* presenting it will be more conformable to their wishes. Only don't forget it, and let me be authorised by you to report that it was graciously received.

Fourthly, I fear the queries for the West Indies will be forgot; but they had better be sent.

Fifthly, and last, not least, let me beg you, my dear Pitt, to have the proclamation issued for stopping the

Guiana supply of slaves. If I felt less on that subject, I should say more; but I really do feel on it very deeply, and so I know you would also, if your attention were not absorbed by such a number of pressing matters: but it will not cost you half an hour I hope to settle this. I beg you will remember how much I myself am personally concerned in it, if any other excuse be necessary for my boring you so about it than the merits of the subject itself. I cannot doubt that ——, and others of his set in abolition matters, will renew the attack they formerly made on me, on account of my not having endeavoured to stop this supply of slaves to the conquered settlements. I trust, however, that I need not assure you that the thing itself, far more than what any one can say on it, weighs on my mind. I repeat it, half an hour would settle the whole — the forms are at hand in the Council Office.

Seventhly, I cannot help saying a word or two on a subject on which I have thought, at least daily for many months — that I mean of the Volunteer command. Surely you will not, if there should be any landing, take your station as colonel of the corps, but remember that you are the mainspring of the whole machine, and there is a reason peculiar to the times or the persons in certain high situations, which renders it indispensable, both on grounds of duty and character, that you should be in a station from which you can issue general orders, applicable to all the parts of the complicated system of measures. You naturally do not hear much concerning the commander-in-chief, but I do not believe people think of him half so well as he deserves. Their chief

reason for not being much more discontented than they are, and still more than they avow themselves to be, is, that they believe if any thing serious really were to happen, *you* would sit in council with him, and they give him credit for a disposition to follow your advice. Let me beg you to destroy this, which I am sure you will ascribe to its true motives, regard for the public interest, and personally for yourself.

I am ever,
My dear P.,
Affectionately and sincerely yours,
W. WILBERFORCE.

P. S. I like this place extremely. The climate suits me; and the bold coast, and opportunities either of fresh air or shelter, are most delectable.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Lyme, September 15, 1804.

My dear Friend,

If I were to say that I had a thousand times thought of writing to you, I might be liable to the reproof you incurred from your Quaker friend, "Friend, didst thou count them?" but I should not so readily give up my assertion as an exaggeration. I had once, also, at least, actually begun a letter to you; but my residence at Broomfield, even after the rising of Parliament, was one incessant hurry. I am now come with

my whole family to a place where I hope to enjoy something of (to me) the greatest of all luxuries, as well as the best of all medicines — quiet. Already I have had one or two delectable strolls with a Testament, a Psalter, or a Cowper, in my pocket (you wont resent my classification); and after I shall have fought through a host of letters, which are drawn up in array against me, but over which I have resolved to assign you the precedence, and have completed another task, which, as being connected with Abolition, naturally devolves on me, I hope to enjoy many a delightful walk along the hoarse resounding shore, meditating on better things than poor blind Homer knew or sung of — *excepto quod non simul esses cætera lætus.* I wish you were here, we might then see something of you; though I find myself thinking and ready to say this to so many friends whom I love, that my wish, if realised, would utterly destroy my quiet, though it would so much mend my society.

Now, to what has been floating before my mind's eye from the first moment of my taking up my pen — your manuscript*, it really will do you credit, which is saying much; but it is also pronouncing on another topic, on which I will more unequivocally say, that you must not think of concealing your name, though it need not stare in the title-page. May God bless it to its best uses! The object is of the very highest importance, and deserves most serious attention. I should be glad to see it again, and would read it more attentively than I have yet done, or, rather, more uninterruptedly; for I did attend to it closely enough when I could get to it. I

* The Hints to a Princess.

really am amazed at your memory, knowing that you cannot have looked of late years into the "Memoirs," Histories," &c., of which you speak. I understood you were to have Mr. Knox with you; if you have an opportunity, assure him with rather more truth than the words commonly imply, of my high consideration and friendly esteem. I should enjoy a few hours' chat with him. But tell him, we have either spoiled his noble friend, or he came spoiled to our hands. I have been, I own, sadly disappointed in him, having expected great and even good things from him, on Mr. Knox's, with me, high authority. I respect his talents, however, and his manners are quite captivating. His value as a man of business is not yet known in the House of Commons.

This is a place much to my mind in some respects; whether, with a mild climate, it is as damp as Devonshire, its near neighbour, generally is, remains to be proved. If it be, it wont suit my constitution. I begin writing one word for another; and having been at my desk till I cannot breathe without a pumping, I must finish. Every blessing attend you.

Kind remembrances, in which Mrs. W. would join if she knew of my writing. Farewell.

Ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ. TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Monday, September 17, 1804.

"Cuilibet in sua arte credendum."

My dear Wilberforce,

During a naval action, a seaman carried down to the cockpit a comrade who had fallen insensible on the deck: — "Why do you bring me a dead man?" cried the surgeon. "Carry him up, and throw him overboard." The bearer obeyed; but as he reached the top of the ladder, his burthen, who had only been stunned with the wind of a ball, revived; and perceiving his purpose, exclaimed, "Alas! messmate, I am not dead." "Hold your tongue, you lying rascal," rejoined the other; "who should know best, you, or the doctor?" so chucked him over the side.

It may, perhaps, be thought by the unlearned, that the maxim above cited has been a little overstrained in the application. In my case, however, about which you kindly inquire in a letter just received by Mrs. Stephen, I dare not so far outrage all those devotees of precedence and authority, the pattern of whose wigs I unworthily wear, as not to trust to my surgeon. It is true that since he said my limb was almost well, it has given me more pain than ever, and that to the eyes of the unlearned it appears just as bad as it did a fortnight ago; but he persisted on Friday that it was healing, though in a very cross-grained manner, and therefore I am bound to believe that it is now more than almost well.

To be serious, I do believe, or at least hope, it is going on well, though at a pace at which it would be distanced by the slowest snail in the kingdom. But to say the truth, I hope it is only because its tricks are so strange and fantastic that I can form no consistent theory of my own to account for them, and therefore hold by the doctor. Alas, my writing! — though I assure you I am serious, and seriously afflicted, I really cannot work; I sleep and I grow fat; and you see I can laugh; but my body, and what is worse, my mind, are very heavy and languid. I was never so animalised in my life, nor so unable to heave myself out of that state. But here are *I*s enough to nauseate ego Erskine himself, and yet *I* must add that *I* am with most affectionate feelings for you and yours,

J. Stephen.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

Lyme, September 20, 1804.

My dear Stephen,

The letter-writing trade, alas, still continues sorely to my annoyance. The mode you prescribe of curing the grievance is a little too much of the lopping system; but I shall seriously and practically consider whether I can lessen the demand on my time, that my poor potentialities, as I think you have it, may not be squandered away. I seldom have had a letter that gave me more pleasure than your last; at least, if that be too

strong an assertion, I can say with Quaker-like strictness that it gratified me very highly indeed. I would not carry my deference for authority quite so far as your sailor in the story, but I really hope I may justly confide in Pearson's judgment, when the event, too, is likely so soon either to confirm or falsify his predictions; yet as we shall be a little anxious about you, till we hear that you are recovering, not merely in the eyes of your surgeon, but in your own feelings, I beg you will let me have another line or two (if a letter be not now on the road I shall half scold you) to let us know how you are.

Can you spare me the pamphlet entitled "Doubts on the Abolition," &c., by an old member of Parliament, which I sent you among others: you shall have it again if you like; and could you send me at the same time your French book "Barrère de St. Venant," or "Malovet:" you shall have it again, or any other book or tract you recommend me to read.

I have been continually hindered from beginning my task for the "Edinburgh Review," and it was only this morning that I ran through the audacious work which I am to criticise. I trust, however, that I shall get on pretty fast when I once begin, which I hope to do to-morrow. I thank God we are all well; but some of our friends here are just now invalids, and I think it right to spend a good deal of time with them; it seems to comfort and cheer them, and really it is pleasing to see that they are much improved within a few years past.

I will, D. V., write to my sister soon. Farewell —

every blessing attend you! It is the daily wish and prayerof

Your affectionate and faithful Brother,

W. WILBERFORCE.

P.S. What shall I say of ——? much, if any thing, therefore nothing now, except that, poor fellow, I wish he was half as solicitous about eternal things as I fear he is about his own elevation: but his qualities are extraordinary.

DEAN OF CARLISLE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Queen's College, September 24, 1804.

My very dear Friend,

Here am I again (after receiving many mercies) and pretty much in my usual plight — troubled a good deal. You are in a sweet place: I am sorry you find yourself always so much in a hurry, and always so oppressed with business. Without great care I find myself getting into that way, so as to be always in a bustle, and with me, when this is given way to, nothing serious can thrive. I believe you have more command of yourself; but take care, and do not encroach on the time which ought to be allotted to quiet meditation. Of how very little moment will the world and all its concerns appear to be by and by, and how bitterly shall we lament

that we had not squeezed out more time for religious improvement! Take notice, there is such a thing as giving way repeatedly, and for a long time, to a bad habit, till we become, in a measure, satisfied that resistance and amendment are impossible. If we don't mind, we are apt to mistake the struggles of conscience, and the pain which it costs us to stifle a sense of duty, for a laudable striving to acquit ourselves well in the race we have to run. But God is not mocked! He watches whether some sort of secret selfishness is not the motive at the bottom.

Thus is it easy to talk, and even in the pulpit. This summer, in spite of infirmities and a fortnight's illness, I have been enabled to preach ten times in great churches at Carlisle and its neighbourhood; and I may add, with very great apparent success. I mentioned my being enabled to get through these things (though with great bodily inconvenience) as something surprising and even paradoxical when the state of my mind is considered. I know not how it is; in one word, I have no confidence towards God, and of late have been very much beset with lamentable temptations. God knows I have for a long time taken considerable pains in self-examination to find out where it is that I particularly offend, as I feel assured this must be the case, or I should not experience what I do; or is it that I have been so long and grievous an offender against light and knowledge, that it is not fit for such a rebel to be treated like a good subject? I remember telling my poor brother once, when I was in considerable affliction of mind, "That notwithstanding my many sins and

obdurate state, still I was well convinced that there did not exist any one earthly improper object that I was secretly and knowingly wishing for, which might be displeasing to a gracious God, and prevent His smiles; and most truly after years of examination I can honestly say the same; but still, I fear, the case is bad; and I suspect it to be in this way, — I do not give myself up wholly to God, — with every power and every nerve, thought, word, deed, — to be His servant here and hereafter to eternity, having no pleasure but in doing His will. Say nothing of this: I could not help pouring out my spirit a little to you. You know not what I suffer. My private prayers are most unaccountably flat and unfeeling, even on the very days that I exhort others with vehemence and with tears: still, still I cannot be persuaded that I am to be given up while I have so much steady love to Christ. What an awful text I preached on the other day, "Know ye not that Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?" If I live I think I shall contrive to be more at Carlisle than I have been hitherto.

N. B. The resurrection of the dead bodies will not be half so surprising as the resurrection of characters.

Yours affectionately,

J. MILNER.

MRS. HANNAH MORE TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Barley Wood, September 24, 1804.

My dear Sir,

I was much gratified with your letter, all communication between us having been suspended so long. I rejoice that you are at last got to sea air and refreshing quiet. I thank you much for your corrections. I inclose my intended first chapter *, copied close that it might come within the frank. I really do look on the work I have undertaken as so important in itself, and so very much above my hand, that it would be a very great thing to me if you could contrive time to look it over. I know how you are pressed for time, nor would I break in on it for any ordinary business, but you know more exactly than any one the very thing I want.

I gave your message to Mr. Knox, who kindly felt that part of it which related to himself, and for his noble friend lamented how much politics and the world impaired all virtue that was not guarded by religion. He has left for you a nice little book of which he is the editor. It is "Burnett's Lives," of which he is very fond, with some additions, and a preface by himself. I will watch for an opportunity to send it you. He is a most extraordinary man; and now that he is in tolerable health, and has surmounted those dreadful nervous complaints which, when last in England, made him at times almost as bad as Cowper, constantly possesses that

* Hints to a Princess.

cheerful happiness which is the fruit of his piety. He is almost the most intellectual and spiritual man I ever knew;—not a thought or care is given to the world. Having been a grand instrument in accomplishing the great work of the Union, he turned his back on politics and politicians, and lives in a religious retirement. His taste is exquisite; his knowledge, particularly in theology, profound and various. His chief delight is in contemplation and inward religion; but he is not in all points in our way. He is of the Platonic Christian school, a disciple of Cudworth, Lucas, Whichcote, Scougal, Worthington, and Joseph Mede. In our disputes, however, I tell him that while Leighton and Baxter are his first favourites, we shall not quarrel much. He passed near three weeks with us: we often wished for you. I hope he will return for a day or two before he goes to Ireland.

Our kindest love to Mrs. W. Do not forget to inquire how I can send you a little work.

May God bless you all!

Yours affectionately,

H. More.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD HOLLAND.*

Kensington Gore, Monday, April 3, 1820.

My dear Lord Holland,

I should sooner have returned your Lordship my thanks for your obliging note, but for the peculiar circumstances in which I received it. I was attending the death-bed of one of the oldest friends I had in the world, the Dean of Carlisle, and I have been since to Cambridge to attend his funeral. I am sorry for having learned from the newspapers that your Lordship's fears have been realised as to Don Canga Arguelles's being the finance minister, but doubtless the other Arguelles will be released from prison; and his influence cannot but be great with the new government, even if he should not be in office, which I presume is not likely to be the case. I will, therefore, still thank your Lordship to forward to him my letter.

Before I lay down my pen, let me touch on another topic, on which I would not detain your Lordship the other morning, by saying what was necessary to explain my sentiments.

* The editors must apologise for the insertion of this and the following letter out of their date. Two letters from a gentleman still living had been inserted in this place, and as referring merely to matters of public interest, the editors had assumed that the permission to print them, which, according to their usual custom, they had solicited, would not be refused. On the eve of publication they received a letter from this gentleman, who was absent from England, requesting their suppression. They have been obliged, therefore, to cancel the sheet, and they insert two letters, which Lord Holland has obligingly forwarded to them during the preceding week.

Were I to express in adequate terms the regret I really feel on account of being under the necessity of refusing your Lordship's obliging invitation, I should subject myself, not without reason, to the imputation of insincerity, or, to use an African term, "*of palavering.*" But, yet, if it were only the zeal you have always manifested as an abolitionist, I should consider you as entitled to my lasting esteem and gratitude; and if I may, without impropriety, open my heart to your Lordship, I can truly declare, — and strange as it may seem to you, considering how much I was opposed to the late Mr. Fox in politics, the case was the same with him also — the simplicity, good-nature, and frankness I have remarked in you have impressed me with feelings of personal regard for you wholly disproportionate to the degree in which I have the pleasure of your acquaintance. They who knew me best in the latter days of Mr. Fox's life, knew how anxiously and even tenderly I felt about him in his last illness. I can truly assure your Lordship, that few things would give me more pleasure than to render you any real service. I really doubt, after pouring forth this effusion, whether or not I should send it; yet I think your Lordship will not misconstrue or blame my frankness. Were I to lay aside this sheet, in order to express the same sentiments and feelings more guardedly and discreetly, I should not write at all. But I have been drawn into the egotism in which I have been indulging by the fear of your being led, by my refusing your kind invitation, to conceive I feel very differently towards your Lordship than I really do; for I can, with truth, assure your Lordship,

that though you must have many friends, there is none among them who is more sincerely interested than myself for your happiness here and hereafter. Excuse my freedom, and believe me ever, &c. &c.,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD HOLLAND.

32, St. James's Place, February 25, 1823.

My dear Lord Holland,

If I am about to make too free with you, you must thank yourself for it. I am encouraged to obey a strong impulse by which I am prompted to address to your Lordship a few lines. It is so entirely from my own mind, that no other human being knows of my writing to you.

Your Lordship may have heard that a plan has been formed, the Quakers having taken the lead, for ameliorating the slavery of the West Indies, with a view to its gradual extinction. In common with many others, though I really believe few feel the impression so strongly as myself, I cannot but be seriously grieved that you, both *quasi* Lord Holland and *quasi* nephew to Mr. Fox, should not be likely to be among the foremost in all reasonable methods for bringing about a conclusion so congenial with all your principles and feelings; and I cannot but entertain a somewhat sanguine hope, which I am aware, however, that my feel-

ings powerfully prompt me to cherish, that if your Lordship could hear all that is to be fairly urged on the subject, you would be convinced, that if the course we are wishing to pursue is not very encouraging in its pecuniary prospects, yet that the alternative, and even the going on of the present system, present a still less hopeful aspect. Would your Lordship like to confer on these topics with a friend or two of mine, who are better qualified than I am to discuss that branch of the subject to which I now allude? Of course I cannot be authorised to state that they would like such an interview, and I will add, that I am persuaded your Lordship will concur with me in opinion that it would not be right or fair, unless your Lordship's mind should be open and undecided on the subject. But if it be, I cannot but be anxious that such an interview should take place. At all events, I trust your Lordship will excuse an application which results from esteem, and from the regard I feel for your Lordship's person, and the interest I take in your character. Allow me, however, as I before did, to request that my having taken this liberty may remain unknown, and I remain, &c.,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD HARROWBY.

Lyme, September 29, 1804.

[Found among Mr. Pitt's Papers.]

My dear Lord Harrowby,

Soon after this reaches you, if not before, you will receive from H. Thornton another letter of Brougham's, which, in my opinion, does him in all respects far more credit than his first, and explains also, and justifies, some parts of the latter, in which I own I thought him much too rash, and considerably too sanguine. There can be no objection to his enlightening the minds of the good people of Holland on the subject of the slave trade, if the president of the Asiatic council, M. Van Yzendoorn, is his agent in the work, and the means to be employed be the advertising and circulating of a translation of the concise statement of the question concerning the abolition of the slave trade and of its appendix (the tract which Brougham drew up just before I made my motion this year, and which was sent to every leading member of both Houses; you must have had a copy of it, and I hope you read it; it was a very good summary). I confess this last letter of B.'s greatly changes and improves my view of the subject, and a prospect opens upon us of the highest importance.

I don't know whether you have much considered the effects on our own old West Indian Islands, of the immense region of Dutch Guiana being cultivated to its full extent. The land is so much more fertile, and the advantages are so great which they enjoy in being ex-

empted from hurricanes, and in having more abundant and cheaper means of feeding their slaves, and procuring lumber, &c., that sugars could be raised there at a rate so much inferior to that at which our old islands can produce them, as to insure their beating the latter out of all foreign markets, and, by smuggling, greatly interfering with them in our own. If we could therefore arrest Guiana in its present state, and say with effect to its cultivation, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further," we should be rendering the greatest possible service to our old islands, which certainly have the strongest claim on us, independently of its being our interest to take care of them. Now the abolition of the slave trade would have this tendency more than any other measure, and therefore the West Indians themselves (the old islands I mean) have always been the strongest advocates for stopping the importation of slaves into Dutch Guiana, having the excellent precedent of the man in Swift's Wonderful Wonder of Wonders, who, I remember, always proposes that the experiment should be tried and the wound inflicted on his neighbour, while he himself is to apply the remedy and effect the cure.

It would be really gaining a great point, therefore, not merely speaking as an abolitionist, but even as a West Indian planter, if the Dutch, supposing them to get back Guiana at the peace, or to have even a chance of recovering it, should abolish the slave trade; and it seems to me, that the steps some of their leading men (I allude chiefly to V. Yzendoorn) are now taking of publishing and circulating the most convincing tracts in

favour of abolition, show so favourable a disposition towards that measure, that we should do well to give it every possible encouragement. Pitt, and you yourself also, are far better judges than I can be, whether it would be proper to go the length of taking any such step as that which Brougham recommends. If it be so, he is himself, I should scarcely doubt, the fittest man to be employed, unless you had some other agent for the work on whose zeal as well as talents you could rely. But this I really leave to you official men, only begging that the importance of the occasion may be maturely weighed. It is, I own, with extreme satisfaction that I see that the very same measure, the adoption of which I have been so long pressing on its own ground, I mean the stoppage of the importation of slaves into Guiana by an order of council, will perfectly fall in with the views which Mr. Brougham wishes us to entertain. Of course, in proportion as we invest British capital in any country, we must be desirous, *cæteris paribus*, of keeping it; and, on the other hand, our prohibiting such investment, will prevent the existence of one hinderance to the restoration.

In my answer to B.'s second letter, I have pressed on him as strongly as I could, that Holland ought to be satisfied if we take no steps unfavourable to the restoration of Guiana. I don't pretend to be very knowing in your diplomatic art, but I confess so far as I can foresee, it is very unlikely indeed that we should keep that settlement. For if Holland be really independent (which must be our first political wish), we shall not wish to retain it; and if we make peace, France still continuing

so pre-eminent as to have the command of Holland, we shall not be able to keep it; so, either way, I think we shall restore it: and, indeed, our West Indian body will be most solicitous for the restoration, except it should be that, we having abolished, and the Dutch continuing the slave trade, they may dread the ruinous competition I have formerly mentioned. Do you remember my asking you, by Brougham's desire, whether you had any objection to his passing through Holland in his way to Vienna, &c.? He did not then give me the smallest idea of his being likely to start the game he has now been hunting. He told me that the translator of his work on colonial policy was a man of high consideration, and that he had made him offers of a friendly reception, &c. &c. B.'s first letter would convey the idea of his having had in his mind from the very first the prosecution of the plan he has been now pursuing, but I believe that is only a *façon de parler*. I understood he was to try to get some information concerning Surinam when in Holland, and afterwards to ascertain the actual condition of the European slaves in the chief countries in which vassalage still subsists — Russia, Poland, and Hungary. But he is manifestly a man of great energy, who has his wits about him, and good wits too.

* * * * * *

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

Lyme, October 2, 1804.

My dear Stephen,

Here, yes, even here, where I have more leisure than I have enjoyed for many a month, interruptions occur, and my work increases on my hands — Alps on Alps arise; so that still it will be two or three days, I fear, before I have finished. I think I should dissatisfy you by my civility to the varlet whom I have undertaken to criticise. In other men's falsehoods there is some apparent reserve, but "our author" beats Falstaff, and never stops or boggles at any assertion which it is convenient to him to make. I could not have conceived it if I had not examined.

My dear Stephen, you may be sure something particular occurred yesterday afternoon to prevent my writing to you, or else, seeing that you wanted the salutation of a friend, I should have said something to show I had you in my thoughts. But a Londoner came to me from Exmouth on House of Commons' business, and I could not refuse to hear him. Indeed the man, I believe, thought me rather churlish in letting him take his leave after a sitting of two hours, and not asking him to stay supper.

What think you of Brougham's last letter? Really it does him credit: the first alone would have given a very unjust and unfavourable view of his proceedings and character.

I have a great mind to employ you in a work which will require no vigour of mind — mere drudgery, I mean

the form of the proclamation for stopping the Guiana slave trade. I have been often disposed to think (believing that procrastination has a greater share in preventing Mr. Pitt from taking the measure than any other obstacle), that if he had the whole ready to issue, he might be more likely to do the needful. I hope you have observed that our stopping this trade would have an excellent effect on our Dutch friends, by the presumption it would suggest that we meant to restore Guiana at the end of the war, and therefore would not suffer our own subjects to vest their capital there.

Kindest remembrances to my dear sister.

I often think of you both.

We often talk of you both.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

I am so tired that I have been near falling asleep with my pen in my hand.

GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ. TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Sunning-Hill, near Staines, October 28, 1804.

My dear Sir,

In answer to your kind inquiry, which you desire me to send by return of post, I have to assure you that I am at present *very strictly* a convalescent, according to the precise definition of the term given by the late Dr. Warren, who, when quizzed by his opposition-friends

for having, in direct contradiction to the opinions which he professed a few hours before, declared the king "convalescent," defended himself by an appeal to the grammatical sense of verbs in *sco*, and insisted that to convalesce was not "to be in progress towards health," but merely "to be in the way of being in progress," &c. Now such is very exactly my state. The fever leaves me for a few days, till I have gained a few ounces of flesh, and then pounces again on me, and carries off about seven drams from each ounce; but as in this Promethean struggle I have hitherto escaped with my twenty grains, so that upon the whole account of Dr. and Cr. I have still a small balance in my favour, I venture to hope that my antagonist is losing ground; and that I shall ultimately be, as some one has elegantly expressed it, "my own man again."

As I believe with you that neither much thinking nor much writing can ever be of service to an invalid, I shall avail myself of your kind permission, and close my letter whenever I feel myself at all fatigued; but yours has given me so much pleasure, that I wish to notice some parts of it, even though I should be obliged to defer a more full and particular answer to a future occasion.

My cousin (John Ellis) happened to be at my elbow when I received your communication, and I gladly used your permission of showing it to him. He perfectly agrees with me, and I can answer for Charles's concurrence in the same opinion, that the appointment of a Bishop to reside in Jamaica would be of infinite service to the morals as well as to the religious opinions of all

ranks of people in that island. You may therefore be assured that we shall be ready to do every thing in our power to assist in promoting such a desirable object; but we do not at present understand how we can contribute to it. The request, you observe, ought to come from the West Indians, and in this you are certainly right; but I know of no West Indian body which can legally or regularly make such a request, except the several assemblies, and you have (too justly, I fear,) described the degree of encouragement which that of Jamaica would be disposed to give to any project in favour of religion and morality. But as I hope to hear from you the mode in which you think that we can assist you, I will say no more at present upon this subject.

If the young man at Cambridge * whom you describe be indeed so perfect a character, his zeal for the cause which he seems to have so much at heart cannot possibly be inefficient. He certainly cannot have any difficulty in obtaining ordination; he cannot, as a member of the Church of England, meet with any public opposition in the discharge of his office. He may be, and ought to be provided, with the strongest recommendation from Government to all the king's officers in the islands, and he ought also to take with him strong injunctions from all the absentees (who wish well to the cause) to their respective representatives, that they may do all in their power in furtherance of his mission. But to render him completely useful, that is, as useful as a person of such talents is capable of being, I should wish him our bishop rather than a missionary. Such talents

* Probably Henry Martyn. Vide *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 146.

as his will be better employed in awakening the dormant zeal of an indolent clergy, in governing and directing an establishment, than in the laborious employment of visiting successive congregations of illiterate though docile savages, whose future progress he can have few means of assisting.

Now, in answer to the possible, and perhaps probable, objections of the present bishops to the ordination of such persons as I formerly described, I would ask whether, if there should be any great difficulty in the way of our obtaining a bishop of our own, it would not be possible to get a law passed authorising ordinations *ad hoc*, which should not give to the person so ordained the right of preaching or holding any clerical office in this country? I own that I am very anxious upon this subject.

With regard to the demand for such men you need be under no uneasiness. Every white man who can write and read is welcome in Jamaica. I would forgive you even for carrying the measure of abolition if you could furnish me with the means of converting my negroes. Do not think, however, that because I am very anxious about my plan, I am indifferent to yours. The morals of the whites are not less important than those of the blacks, and a good bishop would be infinitely useful even to the furtherance of my views. Only explain to me what I can do to promote the measure.

Believe me, &c.,

GEORGE ELLIS.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Lyme, October 29, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I have this day received another packet of your manuscript, and have returned you the five chapters and the Introduction. Now I must enter into a treaty with you. I had fully intended, and half promised, that before my falling to work on a literary business preparatory to our abolition discussions next winter, I would employ a few mornings in writing for the "Christian Observer:" if, therefore, I engage in your service, you positively must supply my place to Messrs. Editors of the Christian Observer. Your subjects are so new and so important, that it really costs as much time to revise as it would to write, and I would not pay your works so bad a compliment as to accost them in any other than my best state. I must therefore receive from you an assurance that you will give me a credit for as many hours as I expend in your service, and I assign over the amount to Messrs. the Editors above-mentioned, who may be paid in any coin which bears your image and superscription. It will, I fear not, pass current; so fall to work accordingly.

I have not been so well of late, and am half afraid of its being thought right that I should go to Bath; but I hope to find myself better in a few days, and to be absolved from the necessity of quitting my retirement till Parliament calls us together, when I presume Windham and Co. (a strange partnership) will require our attend-

ance. Our friend Patty will supply all needful terms of condemnation, so I may conclude, assuring you that I am ever,

My dear Friend,

With kind remembrances to all the Sisterhood,

Yours very sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

The parcel went by Larcombe, who puts up at the "Three Queens," Thomas Street; a most appropriate sojourning for the carrier of princely admonitions.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO ——.

Lyme, November 3, 1804.

My dear ——,

Your kindness in desiring me not to write to you is not lost on us, but really you have a right to expect letters when not in the way of hearing of us from other friends, especially during the recess of Parliament. It would surely be a very unequal distribution to allot nothing to the claims of affection, and yet to be so just in paying to the utmost the minutest demands of business. Having therefore got through most of my tare and trett correspondences, let me enter on one which engages more of the heart if it taxes the head less.

The letter I am now about to write ought, however, to call for supplies from both, for it is to tell my dear

—— of a fault; and to do that affectionately, and to do it skilfully, both heart and head should be set to work. Yet I know in your case the latter may be dispensed with — you will require no more than that sincere affection which will really prompt my pen; and any skilful ingenious apologies, which to those who are disposed to hear of anything but their faults might be necessary, may be left out. I have long thought of telling you that I do not think you always behave quite well to Mr. ——. It is, I know, a delicate matter to interfere between husband and wife, but your love for me, and your Christian humility also (I really say it from my heart without flattery) are such, that I need not keep back any thing, or fear lest any thing I say should offend you, or lessen the affection which I trust will ever mutually prevail between us. You probably know yourself what I mean — a certain quickness of reply which is unbecoming the submissive obedient demeanour which certainly should distinguish the wife towards her husband. I must do Mr. —— the justice to say, that his behaviour on such occasions, and sometimes after them, has been such as to give me the sincerest pleasure — such as to show a mind eminently brought into subjection to Christian principles: I cannot say how much it has pleased me. I own, I fear that I should not have behaved so well in such circumstances; and, though I well know it is only the surprise of the moment in you, and that it indicates no want of affection or respect, yet it would have grieved me extremely, and have had a tendency to weaken my affection. Let me beg you, my dearest ——, to pray and to strive against it, and to be

silent, if you find that by speaking you should offend against the law of conjugal duty.

And now having said this, which I fear may grieve you, let me however assure you that it has given me solid comfort to see you improve in what is most important, — indeed I have no fears for you. Look with confidence, with humble confidence indeed, but with confidence to the Saviour, who has assured us that none who come to Him shall be sent back. Oh! we do not practically give half the credit we ought to the mercy and condescension, and tenderness of our gracious shepherd! Let us but sit down and consider the real meaning and force of such a passage as "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd," and the beautiful words which follow. Again, of such a passage as "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." How much again is included in that most consolatory passage, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" O! let us meditate on these passages, and endeavour to do justice to them! Again, that striking one, "If ye being evil, give good gifts to your children," &c. I often think of it when I see my wife fondling little Bon, that God's love is said to exceed that which women bear to their children.

I think Miss Horner would find Leighton particularly gratifying and useful to her. I never read an author who appeared to me to have drunk so deeply of the Spirit; and his life was accordingly. The children are pretty well, and little Bon plumper and

more laughter loving and causing than ever. Miss S. here brings in little Bon, and little merry Bab runs in, — poor dear little souls.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

MRS. H. MORE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

* * * * * *

I will not tell you how aghast we all looked at the political paragraph.† We are all dismay. But on looking over your letter again, my heart revives — I fancied you were joining Windham's party. * * *

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Lyme, November 15, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I was extremely engaged when I got your letter which mentioned the first impression produced by mine, and the kind solicitude it had occasioned. I always knew you to be a woman of great wit and of true wit; and as wit has been defined to be the coupling together dissimilar and widely separated ideas, I may truly say that never was there a more decisive witticism, if you use it so ill (for it is shocking usage of wit,) as to carry

† Vide p. 335.

it to its definition. I really think there scarcely ever were, or can be, two men more different from each other in all their ideas than Windham and myself; and though it has been sometimes held that men of different tempers may form useful partnerships (aye, even in wit itself, as "how Beaumont's judgment tempered Fletcher's wit") and even lasting friendships, yet for men to act together in political affairs, requires in general some little (and often you will say but very little) agreement in their principles, judgments, &c.

But how shall I ever get through your business, or any body else's business, if I fun away my time in this way, and that too when I am not in a state to keep to the desk long together, and therefore having but little working time at command, should make the most of it? Well, a few minutes may be fairly spared to friendship, when so many of mine, alas! are doomed to the endurance of a display of mutual enmity—which brings us again to Windham; and as that is rather too fertile a field to allow one to gather in a few minutes a millionth of the harvest it affords, let us leave it standing, regretting that so rich a soil should be of so little real productive value. The truth is, there is all that was erroneous in Burke, and little to redeem it in the man's principles, as there was in Burke, who, with all his errors and extravagances, yet called forth one's love and esteem very often, and still more often one's admiration. Kind remembrances.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO J. STEPHEN, ESQ.

Lyme, Sunday night, 10 o'clock, November 18, 1804.

My dear Stephen,

I have been waiting with more anxiety than any one but you would conceive, in hopes of seeing or hearing of a proclamation forbidding the slave trade to the conquered colonies; and am so much disappointed in not even now finding any thing said about it in the newspapers, that I break through the resolution I had made not to mention the matter to you, that the measure might break upon you at once, and I quite enjoyed in idea your demeanour and feelings on the annunciation of it. But I have no correspondent in town on whom I can depend for letting me know, and this is such a sad town for intelligence, that I doubt if a Gazette comes near it. I may therefore wait many days longer without being informed how the matter really is settled, or whether it be settled at all. The Order in Council was to have been brought before the Privy Council on Wednesday or Thursday se'night last; but it was put off on some ground of form, and partly because Tobago was not to be included. Let me beg you to give me what information you can. I have been intending to write to you. You have been always in my thoughts, but I waited, hoping this business would be brought to some point. I have had much writing about it for a long time past.

Wishing and praying that God may grant you every blessing in time and eternity, I am ever

Affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

THE DEAN OF CARLISLE TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

My dear Friend,

We are nothing but trouble to you. Do you know that poor *Snubby* soon grew tired of his new idea of studying the law, or rather, I believe, he never very seriously and deliberately resolved upon it. That suggestion seems to have been cherished chiefly to serve the immediate purpose of getting released from the sea-service. His point being gained, the moment he began to reflect, he found the study of the law was not at all at his heart, and he now gives it up entirely. He now, in fact, does not deny this to be a true statement.

Poor fellow, he remained very unhappy for some time, conscious, I should hope, of having left the sea too precipitately; at the same time, nothing like such a confession comes from him, but entirely the contrary, and therefore we are to consider him as having done with the sea.

After ruminating on his situation he seems now inclined to the army; and I have had a good deal of conversation with his father (before that idea had arrived at any maturity, but not before it had sprung

up), who is very kind to him, and will be contented with his doing any thing that is creditable; I have therefore repeatedly told *Snubby* within the last month that he is to be any thing he pleases. His father will allow him 300*l.* or 400*l.* per annum, only "be about something; — do something; and take care that you be useful in your generation, and a credit and comfort to your friends."

You are to consider, therefore, this letter, not as asking advice as to the what? but the army being determined on, the how?

I am sure you will do your best. One plan that he has thought of is to go, after a while, to some of the military institutions, if he could gain admittance. I think there is one, he says, at Wickham; but on a little inquiry, he has reason to think, that a man must be first an officer, and have seen some discipline, at least, before he can be admitted. He understands he must be a subaltern only for two years before he can be a captain, and I take it, it is the shortness of this service, compared with the length of that in the navy, that makes him prefer the army, for he hastens, in his own mind, to command. He has one great mark of genius, viz. vast confidence that he could improve all that he sees, and do things better — and he is really clever. I wish he understood his own mind better. My opinion is, that he will in the army also be disgusted with something that will make him retire before he has got much good. However, age may make him wiser; and at any rate, I really think he had better make the trial, and keep

out of idleness. He is by no means vicious, but he is eager, and must be launched soon.

Now come the questions: —

1. How is a youth of this sort to proceed? viz. a youth of twenty-two, strong and hard as flint, a very good scholar, excellent mathematician, low stature, and *snubby:* how is such a one to begin? He is not to be considered as one who is idle, or inclined to evil, but one who would really be active, and undergo any labour if he liked the thing he was about; but one who would hate an idle station in the West Indies.

2. I have wished him to find some truly sensible and experienced officer who should study his case and capacities, and advise him for the best. He has been in London for the purpose, but found only a lad or two.

3. I thought Lord —— admirably qualified to tell him (or at least to recommend him to such an officer as would tell him) all he wanted; but he does not much like to go to Lord ——, because he knows he thinks *Snubby* has been so foolish, and because *Snubby* supposes he would begin of advising him to the counting-house to get money. Matthew despises money.

I wish you could send him to some other good officer of sound intellect for instruction, as to the entrance he should make in this new life.

4. Viz. what regiment; — also foot or horse — or what?

Do write to me soon.

Yours ever,

J. M.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Lyme, November 22, 1804.

My dear Friend,

Having received your letter last night, I made many inquiries this morning after another Lyme and Bristol carrier, finding that Larcombe would not set out on his return before Monday next; but I am assured that no such carrier is to be found; and you must remember that, in common, the commodities these gentlemen have to transport are not of such a fermentable sort as yours, with which Mr. Larcombe, like Cowper's unconscious newsman, has been honoured; but —[here I am irresistibly summoned to a contest at marbles, and, in these days of the rights of man, as I would not furnish any valid ground for rebellion, and remembered I was at Lyme, I obeyed the call]. To return to Mr. Larcombe's cargo: it consists of articles which may in general rest in peace in expectation of their conveyance. I am assured that on Monday Larcombe will take his departure, and I already have ready for him —

Chap. 4.* Importance of ancient history: — Egypt and Persia.

Chap. 5. Greece.

Chap. 6. Rome.

Chap. 7. I have already sent you.

Chapters 5. and 6. you will improve greatly by adding to them; they are now the essential oil of their re-

* Of the Manuscript of "Hints for a Princess."

spective histories. I will try to let you have another chapter, *i. e.* chapter 8. before next conveyance. Farewell.

Yours ever,
W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO MRS. H. MORE.

Lyme, December 4, 1804.

My dear Friend,

Never fear: the parcel is not — cannot be lost: such an event never happened; and sooner than it shall not be rummaged out I will send my servant, if it be needful, to hunt himself in the waggoner's chaos. I will write by the post which takes this letter, to this same miscreant at the White Lion, and tell him that if the parcel do not forthwith appear he shall be sent to the army of St. Domingo, a far more worthy cause for such an effect than one which produced it to a French officer, a lieutenant-colonel, who not being drilled into the perfect discipline of the new school, when at a ball given by Madame Buonaparte, Napoleon, being persuaded to dance, made as if he offered him his sword and belt to keep for him, as if he had been a valet, drew back a little: — "Ha," exclaims the mighty Napoleon, (before he was emperor,) "I find I was mistaken;" and beckoning to one who actually was a general officer (and doubtless must have been sure to become so in any army, whereas, too generally, suppleness is the road to rank),

" Here," says he to the general officer, who instantly came forward from a distance with a most courtier-like agility, and took the sword and belt, and held them in a most obsequious attitude. No more was said; but when the poor lieutenant-colonel got home, he found already on his table an order to join the army of St. Domingo.

How came I to tell this long story, when I am much pressed for time, and must be short in business, because long in trifling? The chapter you want I will get through, if it please God, in a very few days; and to prevent all mischances I will send it by the post in franks. I have been running over part of it to-day, and see it will take much time to think over; but let me advise you to read that chapter in the first part of Butler's analogy, wherein he expressly treats of the sure progress to power and dominion of a state which should be established and governed on religious principles. I rather think 'tis the fifth, but I am sorry I have not the book here; luckily I have another here who is decidedly on our side, and whom I well remember, because I have often been about to quote him against Windham, I mean Machiavel; and there is in Montesquieu (whom consult) some passage wherein he speaks of the importance of religion. Farewell.

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO Z. MACAULAY, ESQ.

Lyme, December 7, 1804.

My dear Sir,

I feel uneasy in not coming forward to assist poor Hall *; and really mere feelings, and feelings less legitimate than Christian sympathy, prompt one to desire to contribute liberally towards his aid. But as it is impossible for me to judge what I ought to subscribe, because that must depend on what others give, and what in the whole is raised, I must again trespass on you, and beg you to judge and put down my name accordingly. I doubt in my own mind between 10*l.* and 20*l.* But surely it is a strange plan to buy him an annuity at the precise period at which you cannot judge at all what income will be wanted for his comfortable subsistence. If, poor man, he should never recover, I should imagine that after that becomes clear, 100*l.* per annum would be as much as would be desirable. Do they doubt people's willingness to subscribe, except under the impulse of the first shock of such an article of intelligence? I hope there can be no cause for such a precaution. I beg you will deal unreservedly with me, and if even 20*l.* be less than you think I ought to give, tell me freely.

The Rev. Mr. Snape again wants books and tracts; may I beg you to send him a supply to Bolton in Lancashire? It is a large place, where he makes great

* Robert Hall was at this time afflicted with insanity.

exertions, but wants help; only think of making, on a *very* bad day, for his schools, a subscription at church of near 100*l.*

I hope to send you a paper for the Christian Observer to-morrow.* You will think it too much of a novel; but in all the leading particulars it is really true. I wish I could help you still more. Kind remembrances.

Yours ever,
W. WILBERFORCE.

W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO JAMES STEPHEN, ESQ.

Lyme, December 20, 1804.

My dear Stephen,

I hope I need not assure you that no considerations of ease or self-indulgence should prevent my setting out for London directly, if I thought it would be productive of benefit to our great cause; but after a little reflection, I am clearly of an opposite opinion. Here I may, and I trust I shall, get a little time to work at something which may hereafter come into use, but there I know from experience I could do no business. Then the consideration of health is not to be entirely left out of account, and certainly (though no way of life can ever make me a Hercules) the quiet and regularity of our goings on here are highly serviceable to me. I thank God I seldom have been better than

* Vide "The Letters of Colonus," in Dec. 1804 and Jan. 1805.

during the last three or four days, though the weather is most uncommonly severe for this place; my old enemy, the east wind, brings us your climate, not softened by its passage over the pure Dorsetian downs. But there is one peculiarity of the climate here, that even with an east wind it is always perfectly clear; no haziness or mist have I ever seen, except in mild warm weather.

I have been very carefully perusing your paper, which in the main I like very much indeed, and hope to turn it to account. Your statement of the ravages of the yellow fever is admirably thrown in. I cannot but regard that dreadful visitation as the scourge of the Almighty, and I fear we shall still more severely feel its effects. I more and more see reason to regret that the public, and even, I have no doubt, ministers themselves, are so ignorant of the horrible cruelties and detestable perfidy of Buonaparte and his agents towards the St. Domingo blacks; you indeed did your best to enlighten them, by the publication of Toussaint's Life, but I wish still more could be done, especially as paragraphs are continually coming out, harping on the cruelties of Dessalines; and the provocations he received are either unknown or forgotten.

Farewell; I am pressed for time, and we have a house in which several of the chimneys smoke in an east wind, which makes sad work with my eyes. Kindest remembrances to my sister. God bless you, my dear Stephen. Let it be to both of us a comfort that we have laboured to resist the wicked and cruel system of the slave trade. I can truly say I often thank

the Almighty for conducting me to such a cause, and pray for guidance how I may best conduct it—and think too. But there are more difficulties than you sometimes consider; and I am sure, in your cooler moments, you will think that it would be sad policy to be able to say *liberavi animam meam*, at the expense of doing any good to the cause itself. But do not let us consume our time in these discussions. I hope I need not make any fresh demands on your pen, and will avoid it as much as possible. Once more God bless you.

I am, ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"I have often wished, in some way or other, to do a little justice to poor Christophe. I possess letters from him, which would do him great honour. Perhaps they may form a chapter, if ever any memoranda of my own life and times are put together." — *Letter from Mr. Wilberforce to one of his Sons*, March 11, 1825.

HAYTIAN LETTERS.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO GENERAL MACAULAY.

Kensington Gore, April 6, 1816.

My dear General,

No human being has the slightest idea of my writing, or intending to write this letter. Whatever blame, therefore, may be imputable to it, is wholly chargeable on myself. Yet though, when I proceeded to take up my pen, it was with some misgivings, I cannot but hope, whatever you may think of the idea itself which I am about to suggest to you, that you will find my apology for communicating it, not merely in the high esteem it implies both of your talents and principles, but also in that imperative sense of duty which dictates the communication. I only regret my being so much pressed for time, that I cannot at all do justice to the subject. But you must suppose that I shall leave many of the considerations which are in my mind unimparted, and to be stated to you in person, when I can talk freely, and that I now shall lay before you little more than the main idea. Oh, thought I, last night, while lying awake, and revolving in my mind the inconceivably important

subject of the opportunity of sowing the seeds of knowledge, and still more of Christianity, in Hayti, — Oh that General Macaulay could be prevailed on to go over, though for ever so short a time, as the commander-in-chief of any party that should be sent to King Henry! And why not? thought I. Lord Selkirk was at one time disposed to go to Africa. And then my mind went on building the castle of which I had thus laid the foundation, till there was soon a goodly and most valuable edifice. For more than an hour, I believe, I could not drive out this fabric of the brain, as a necessary preparative to getting to sleep again.

But though the whole prospect presents itself to the eyes of my mind by day in less vivid colours as a reality, my maturest and most wakeful reason approves of it as the most promising of all speculations, if it could indeed be realized. I declare, unless I deceive myself, were I in your situation, and with the same deep convictions I now feel of the great and lasting benefits which would probably result from my engaging in this enterprise, I would undertake it. Besides all the other good consequences, of which one of the greatest would be that your example would dispose respectable and good men, in various lines, to devote themselves to the service of St. Domingo, it would lead — and I see no other probable road — to the substitution of the English for the French language, and of Protestantism for the Roman Catholic religion; because your influence would be such, (all mine of course being combined with it,) that you might set up seminaries of instruction, which would, by degrees, produce the desired effect.

Do not, however, suppose, my dear General, that I am not aware, in making this proposal, of the weight of the burden which I wish you to impose on yourself. Still, such are the circumstances of the world, that there is not, I believe, in the whole world any human being so adapted, in all important particulars, as yourself, for this most interesting service. And must that service go unperformed? Let me beg you, however, to peruse the letters from King Henry and De Limonade, and you will then better judge of their state of mind; and if you do not at once dash the cup from your hand, I think a more detailed and particular discussion of the question would dispose you to drink it. But I must break off. Forgive me, my dear General, for my freedom; and I will only add again, that were I so circumstanced, and so qualified, as you are, for I am the one as little as the other, (I have not been used to command men, act and think in times of bustle, and I cannot speak French fluently,) I should esteem the service as one of the most honourable, and, in all its consequences, the most beneficial, in which I could possibly engage.

I am ever, my dear General,
With cordial esteem and regard,
Your sincere and affectionate friend,
W. WILBERFORCE.

I will thank you to return the papers as soon as you can. I have not time to read over what I have written, but the meaning must be plain. Mistakes of language you will excuse.

GENERAL MACAULAY TO WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Downing Street, April 8, 1816.

My dear Sir,

I am prevented going to Kensington Gore this morning as I had intended, and therefore I return the papers. Your powerful appeal is irresistible, and I hold myself at your disposal. I would, however, suggest for your consideration how far government would be disposed to relish a visit by me to St. Domingo under our present equivocal relations with France in respect to that island — incognito I could not go; and when you reflect on my acquaintance with Lord Wellington — my rank in the army — my having filled diplomatic situations, &c., I feel more than half inclined to doubt the practicability of your reconciling government to such a mission. I shall say no more at present, as I shall take the earliest opportunity of being disengaged to see you.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Most faithfully yours,

C. MACAULAY.

HENRY [CHRISTOPHE, KING OF HAYTI] TO W. WILBERFORCE, ESQ.

Au Palais de Sans-soucy, 18 Novembre, 1816.
l'An 13 de l'Indépendance.

HENRY, par la Grace de Dieu et la Loi Constitutionelle de l'Etat, Roi d'Haïty, &c. &c. &c.
à W. WILBERFORCE, Esq., Membre du Parlement Britannique, &c. &c.

Mon Ami,

Je me sers de l'occasion de M. Chalmers, homme simple et sûr, que j'ai employé à mon service dans sa profession, pendant le séjour qu'il a fait à Haïty, pour vous adresser ma réponse à vos trois lettres, privées et confidentielles, sous les dates des 14 & 20 Août dernier.

Je vois avec plaisir, mon ami, la manière franche et amicale, que vous agissez dans nos communications. J'agirai comme vous, sans réserve, et vous verrez que je suis digne d'entendre et de connaître la vérité. Vous pouvez vous reposer sur la discrétion de mes secrétaires pour toutes les communications et les ouvertures que vous auriez à me faire. Lorsque vous aurez quelque chose d'important et de confidentiel à me faire part, vous pouvez charger une personne dévouée de vos dépêches et me l'adresser directement. Je ferai solder religieusement les frais que ses dépenses auront causées.

Sanders vous a dit avec raison que j'entends par-

faitement l'Anglais ; c'est dans cette langue que je désire que vous continuez toujours à correspondre avec moi.

Je goûte parfaitement vos idées lumineuses sur les grands principes du gouvernement que vous m'avez exposés. Je suis persuadé de leur efficacité pour le bonheur de mes concitoyens, et pour mon propre bonheur, puisqu'il ne se compose que de celui de mes concitoyens. Mon application constante sera de les employer. Je ferai tout ce qui sera en mon pouvoir pour justifier la haute opinion que mes amis, et vous en particulier, avez conçue de moi. Je suis pénétré, mon cher Wilberforce, des sentimens généreux et philantropiques que vous m'exprimez, et je serais indigne de l'amitié pure que vous m'avez vouée, si je ne faisais tous mes efforts pour la mériter, en suivant les sages conseils que vous me donnez.

Vous voyez avec quelle sollicitude je m'empresse à donner le bienfait de l'éducation à mes concitoyens : la nouvelle méthode me paraît la plus sublime qu'on puisse employer pour préparer les études. Je suis émerveillé des effets de cette excellente méthode ; tous mes soins seront de l'étendre, et de lui donner à Haïty toute l'extension et l'encouragement possible. C'est bien aussi mon intention de faire délivrer des prix aux élèves qui se seront distingués ; chaque école ou collège aura une époque fixée pour la distribution des prix, comme celle de l'indépendance, de ma fête, celle de la reine, de mes enfants, et ceux des autres jours mémorables de notre Révolution. Je me suis efforcé autant qu'il m'a été possible de faire inculquer les

principes de religion et de morale parmi mes concitoyens; mais, mon ami, songez combien un peuple, nouvellement sorti des ténèbres de l'ignorance et de l'esclavage, qui a éprouvé vingt cinq ans de secousses et de révolution, a besoin encore de temps, de soins, et d'efforts, pour parvenir à étendre les principes religieux et moraux dans toutes les classes de la société; l'objet de ma sollicitude est donc de les étendre encore davantage, mais non pas les principes de cette religion défigurée par la fanatisme et la superstition, mais cette religion que vous professez, pleine de l'essence et de l'humanité de son divin Auteur. Il y a longtemps que je désire la voir établie à Haïty.

Par la considération et le respect dont j'ai entouré les liens du mariage, je n'ai qu'à me louer de l'empressement de mes concitoyens à les former, et des heureux résultats qu'ils ont pour la morale.

La tolérance est établie à Haïty. Je permets à chacun la liberté d'y servir la Divinité à sa manière. J'étendrai, s'il est nécessaire, les effets de cette tolérance en lui donnant la plus grande latitude. Je suis pénétré et je sens la nécessité de changer ce que les manières et les habitudes de mes concitoyens peuvent encore conserver de semblables à celles des Français, et de les modeller sur les manières et les habitudes Anglaises; la culture de la littérature Anglaise dans nos écoles, dans nos collèges, fera prédominer enfin, je l'espère, la langue Anglaise sur la Française; c'est le seul moyen de conserver notre indépendance, que de n'avoir absolument rien de commun avec une nation dont

nous avons tant à nous plaindre, et dont les projets ne tendent qu'à notre destruction. Il y a longtemps que je désire que la langue Anglaise soit la langue nationale de mon pays.

J'en ai toujours parlé à mes concitoyens, je leur ai toujours fait sentir la nécessité de n'avoir absolument rien de commun avec la nation Française, d'embrasser la religion Anglicane comme la plus sublime, comme celle où l'on trouve généralement le clergé le plus vertueux, le plus honnête, et le plus éclairé; bien différent en cela du clergé Catholique Romain, dont la dissolution de mœurs est connue, l'apôtre et le défenseur de l'esclavage. Je leur ai fait connaître l'énorme différence qui existe entre les Anglais et les Français; combien ces derniers se sont dégénérés et avilis; que lorsqu'on voudrait désigner un homme vil et faux, l'on devrait dire faux comme un Français...je sais cependant que, généralement parlant, il y a des honnêtes gens dans tous les pays, mais presque tous les Français que nous avons eu occasion de connaître, ne se sont pas montrés à nous sous des couleurs plus favorables . . . qu'au contraire, les Anglais adorent leur patrie, qu'ils sont si embrasés du patriotisme national, et que la trahison est si abhorré et détesté chez eux, qu'à peine peut on citer un petit nombre de traîtres; combien ils sont braves, loyaux, philantropes, religieux observateurs de leur parole; qu'il suffisait à un Anglais de jurer sur la Bible, pour être cru sur sa parole; qu'on n'avait jamais vu d'exemple qu'ils avaient faussés leurs paroles, ou leurs affirmation si solennellement données; qu'on ne pouvait

pas en dire autant des Français, et des Catholiques Romains, qui faisaient journellement profanation des choses reputées les plus saintes parmi eux; que le souverain, qui se qualifie de fils aîné de l'Eglise, n'a pas craint de laisser signer, par son ministre, sans provocation, comme sans insulte, la mort de 400 mille de mes concitoyens, pour pouvoir à repeupler notre pays avec son malheureux frères transplantés d'Afrique; que ce souverain, qui se dit si religieux, a envoyé de vils espions pour intriguer, semer le trouble et la confusion dans notre pays tranquille; qu'il ne travaille qu'au rétablissement des préjugés et de l'esclavage, jusque même dans son propre pays. Enfin, je désire que mes concitoyens puissent posséder les vertus des Anglais pour leur propre bonheur.

Les Haïtiens aiment généralement les Anglais; c'est le seul peuple avec laquelle ils puissent mieux compatir. Mes concitoyens feront tout ce que je leur conseillerai, car ils sont intimement persuadés que mes conseils n'ont pour but que leur bonheur. J'emploierai mon influence, les leçons puissantes de l'exemple, pour les amener à ce point si désiré, et je suis d'avance assuré qu'ils se porteront avec joie à cette grande réforme, quand le temps en sera arrivé; c'est-à-dire, lorsque la connaissance de la langue Anglaise sera répandue dans une partie de la population, ce qui ne sera pas longtemps, d'après la méthode de Lancaster, et d'après les heureuses dispositions que montrent les élèves qui s'instruisent sous M. Gulliver.* Je désire de tout mon cœur que les souhaits que vous avez faites pour le bonheur et l'instruction des Haïtiens puissent se réaliser. Puissiez-vous à votre

* A schoolmaster sent out by Mr. Wilberforce. — *Life of Wilberforce.*

tour, O mon ami, vous énorgueillir des vertus et de la civilisation de ce peuple, dont vous aurez été un des bienfaiteurs! Croyez que leur reconnaissance sera éternelle; croyez aussi que ma pensée sera sans cesse portée vers le grand but pour lequel vous désirez les voir élevés; en effet, combien je m'estimerai heureux de les voir contribuer à vos vues en vous aidant à perfectionner et améliorer le sort de nos frères d'Afrique. J'ai reçu et agréé, mon ami, avec sensibilité, votre portrait que vous m'avez adressé. Il me tardait de posséder les traits d'un de nos plus vertueux amis; en retour, et d'après le désir que vous m'avez témoigné, je vous envoie le mien, et celui de mon fils, le Prince Royal, que j'ai fait peindre par le Sieur Evans.

Je souhaite que vous acceptiez ce gage de mon amitié, avec autant de plaisir que j'en ai eu à recevoir le vôtre, et que vous puissiez les considérer comme ceux de deux de vos plus sincères amis. J'ai appris avec le plus grande peine, et j'ai été désappointé, que le but pour lequel j'avais adressé dernièrement des confitures en Angleterre, a totalement manqué, par l'indiscrétion de Sanders; ne pouvant connaître en quelle somme se seraient élevés les droits. M. Strafford m'avait cependant promis d'écrire à cet effet.

Je vous prie, mon ami, de me faire agréer dans la Société de l'Institution Africaine, dans celle de la Société de la Bible Anglaise et Etrangère, et dans celle de l'Ecole Anglaise et Etrangère, si toutefois il n'y aurait pas d'impossibilité, et alors vous le feriez de la manière que vous croirez la plus convenable. Lorsque les lettres de change que je compte vous adresser vous parvien-

dront, vous pourrez faire couvrir les frais que cette admission aura nécessitée.

Je suis et demeure tout à vous,

Votre Ami,
HENRY.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO LORD TEIGNMOUTH.

Kensington Gore, June 18, 1817.

My dear Lord,

I have received a letter from the Count de Limonade, Secretary of State to the Haytian Government, dated 20th March last, containing the following passage:— "His Majesty has already expressed to you, through me, his wish to repay the British and Foreign Bible Society for the Bibles and Testaments, French and English, which Lord Teignmouth was so obliging as to send him in the Society's name. His Majesty now begs you to embrace the first opportunity of paying the amount (which he, Count Limonade, mentions as 1601 or 1602 dollars), in such a manner as not to wound the delicacy of that venerable Society, for which His Majesty feels the highest respect."

There can be no impropriety, I trust, in my deviating from the course prescribed to me, by an open and direct communication to the Society through your Lordship; because there will, I dare say, be no such feeling as King Henry had the delicacy to apprehend opposed to the acceptance of payment for the books, though intended

by our Society as a gift. On the contrary, the Society, I am sure, will be gratified by such a proof of the value King Henry puts on the Holy Scriptures, and of his disposition to encourage the circulation of them among the Haytian people.

In giving them this title, and in calling that extraordinary man their king, I shall not be misunderstood by your Lordship. It would be less consonant to the duties of neutrality to use appellations not only inconsistent with the rights they assert, but with the situations in which they actually stand. But while we take no part in any political questions between the rival Haytian Governments, or between them and France, we must, as men and as Christians, applaud and sympathise with the zeal of King Henry, in promoting the intellectual and moral improvement of the people over whom he presides; and I think it due to him to say, that, to my knowledge, it is not in the present instance only that he has proved himself earnestly intent on fulfilling that sacred duty of a sovereign. He applied to me some time ago by letter, with a pressing request that I would assist him in procuring and sending over from this country proper persons to instruct his people in letters and useful arts, undertaking to bear the whole expense of their voyage, as well as to provide for them liberally on their arrival. Though I have only been able, in a small part, to accomplish his beneficent purposes, yet so forward has he been to supply me with the means of executing his wishes, without any possible inconvenience to myself, that he would not wait for the ordinary commercial means of remittance, but purchased bills of exchange,

and has remitted them to my brother-in-law Mr. Stephen and myself, for the beneficent uses above specified, lest his favourite purpose should be delayed. I am therefore only paying over part of King Henry's money when, in pursuance of his wish, I send the price of the Bibles and Testaments to the treasurer of the Society.

I have the more pleasure in making this communication through your Lordship to our Society, because King Henry has been so often represented to the British public in a very unfavourable light. Many, I doubt not, have been the inventions of his enemies; and this very business furnishes a proof of the assertion. For your Lordship will probably recollect that this very Count de Limonade, whose official letter I have received by the latest conveyance, was stated in the newspapers to have been shot by King Henry at a public dinner some months ago. Let any one who wishes to form a more unprejudiced estimate of King Henry's character, read the work of Colonel Malanfant,—of an author who was no friend of the African cause, but a French officer and a St. Domingo proprietor; who, however, has stated and could admire the great qualities of this extraordinary man.

I have the honour to be, my dear Lord,
Your Lordship's faithful servant,
W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE KING OF HAYTI.

[Private.]

October 8, 1818.

Sire,

Elevated as is your own situation, you would stand far less high in my estimation were I not persuaded that the intelligence which I am about to communicate will gladden your Majesty's heart, as it has just now warmed and exhilarated mine; for with delight I have this day read a letter from one of the Secretaries of State informing me, that (blessed be God for this most important event!) the Spanish court has actually signed a treaty by which she has stipulated to abolish the cursed slave trade immediately to the north of the Line, and generally and finally to abolish it in May 1820, having acceded also to conditions (without which an abolition would be far less valuable) for carrying the law into practical effect. Similar conditions for enforcing the Abolition north of the Line have been agreed upon with Portugal, and we shall use our utmost efforts to prevail on France and the United States of America to accede to a similar treaty; for I grieve to say that I now hear that, notwithstanding their abolition laws, an illicit trade in human flesh is still carried on to a great extent both by French and American subjects. But having just now received this most welcome intelligence respecting Spain, I felt invincibly prompted to communicate the good tidings to your Majesty, first of all my correspondents. It is not without the payment of a large sum of money that we have brought the Spanish

cabinet to such conditions. It was only by purchase that a less favourable convention could be obtained from Portugal. But how can money be so well employed as in thus effecting the deliverance of so great a portion of our fellow-creatures from the most cruel scourge that ever afflicted the human race? How better than in assisting to batter down that barrier by which vast regions of the earth have been kept for centuries in darkness and barbarism; the light and improvement being intercepted which they would otherwise have derived from their intercourse with more polished nations? But, as the Baron de Vastey truly remarks, how would Europe ever have been civilised if the previously enlightened nations had established a regular system of slave trading along her coasts, by which her whole interior would have been rendered one vast field of insecurity and terror? But Monsieur de Vastey seems not to know what I once mentioned in the House of Commons, — what Mr. Pitt also mentioned as a fact at once curious and humiliating to British arrogance, — that the English themselves were formerly the objects of a regular slave trade. * ..... But neither your Majesty nor I have leisure for this discussion, and therefore I must desist from it, before I have said all that it suggests.

Unless I hear to the contrary, I shall write to your Majesty only on general subjects and principles, and on topics the peculiar delicacy of which may render me desirous of submitting my sentiments to your own eye. In the case of matters of detail, or of those which,

* Mr. Wilberforce then mentions the trade for supplying Ireland with English slaves, &c.

however important, are less secret or delicate in their nature, I shall address myself to your ministers. Under the former head indeed, as that which is in the highest degree interesting to me, no less than to yourself, I go on to state that I made it my business lately to ascertain whether or not the French were still meditating an attack on you; and though, on account of the mischievous consequences which might result from your not being prepared to meet any such attack, both Mr. Stephen and I have always been afraid of saying (what I must state to be the general language of well-informed men) that the French have relinquished all their hopes of reconquering the island, yet I am happy to be able to assure your Majesty that I had it from good authority a very few weeks ago, that no preparations of a hostile character towards Hayti were making in France. The slave trade being abolished, I cannot myself conceive that any violence or folly of the ex-colonists could induce the French court to incur the heavy expense which a new Haytian expedition would occasion. May God avert any such an undertaking for your people's sake, for humanity's sake, nay for the sake of the poor creatures themselves who would become the victims of the madness and blindness of their governors in France!

And now, in justice to myself, let me remark to your Majesty, though I believe it was mentioned in my last letter, that it is by no means easy to find for Hayti professors and teachers properly qualified, and on whose principles and characters we can securely rely. Except in the naval and military professions, the disinclination of men of good character to go abroad is very great,

unless they can find no way of maintaining themselves at home. But from this remark must be excepted what, blessed be God! has now become a large class — that of Christian missionaries. There are several societies in this kingdom for the purpose of maintaining these; and numbers of missionaries have been sent out to all parts of the world (to our own West Indies among others) wherever, from the circumstances of the case, there was any want of religious instruction and moral improvement. Some of these, I doubt not, would be happy to settle under your Majesty's protection; and you may be assured that I should send none on whose character and conduct I could not rely. But the situation of Hayti is such as must call forth the enthusiasm of every well-informed and generous mind — and there are already many in this country; and in proportion as we can make the public acquainted with the grand experiment on human nature which your Majesty is carrying on, there will be more and more of those who are anxious in any way in which they may be able, to promote the accomplishment of your designs for the instruction and improvement of your people. But in many quarters the grossest errors now prevail respecting those designs (from what cause originating I need not specify), as well as respecting the real state of Hayti. We had good reasons for not taking measures sooner for entering into the controversy which our proceeding to undeceive the public would certainly have produced. This will be, however, a work in which at the proper time we shall gladly engage hereafter; and the powerful pen of my dear brother Mr. Stephen, as well as my

own, if needed, will I doubt not be willingly devoted to this service. Still, even at present, there are many friends of the Haytian cause: for these I am anxiously looking out, in conjunction with my dear friends Mr. Stephen, Mr. Macaulay, and many other zealous advocates of the African cause. And I trust that many of those who may have been urged in part to enter into your Majesty's service by the fair influence of prudential motives, may also take no small interest in the success of your Majesty's generous wishes for the enlightening and elevating of your people.

Religious men only to be confided in.

But, whatever may in some few instances be the effects of natural benevolence or of moral probity, or of professional honour, long and large experience in life has convinced me, that religion alone can be depended upon for enabling men with spirit and perseverance to discharge a course of laborious duties, or to resist the temptation to which they will be necessarily exposed.

And on this most important subject of religion and morals, I will open my mind to your Majesty with frankness; because I remember,—surely I can never forget it,—that you declared yourself my friend, and therefore entitled me to use that best right of friendship, the right to state my sentiments without reserve, assured that justice will be done to the motive which has prompted them, even where doubts may be entertained of their propriety. But of your Majesty I have no doubt; I can have no doubt that the friend of Toussaint will concur with me in opinion that it is on the basis of religion alone that the prosperity of political

communities, no less than the wellbeing of individuals, must be founded. All the wise legislators of antiquity have held this doctrine, as well as the greatest writers of modern times, as Machiavel, Montesquieu, &c., however little religion is in their personal characters. The Roman state, which at last established its dominion over all the rest, was declared by the wisest and best as well as one of the most celebrated of its citizens, Cicero, to owe all its superiority to the fear of the gods; and it was not till the decay of this grand principle of religion that the decline of the state began, which too soon terminated in its ruin.

But if even a false religion could produce such effects, by causing men to expect after this life the rewards or punishments of a Supreme Being, instead of looking only to present interest or gratification, how much more effectual must the influence of true religion be! And it is the glory of the religion which we Englishmen profess, that it is friendly to true liberty — liberty combined with law and order. Our religion courts the light. It gives the Holy Scriptures into the hands of every individual, and tells him to make the lessons which they inculcate the universal rule of his thoughts, and words, and actions. I would not wish, however, to conceal from your Majesty, to whom I write with friendly frankness, that though, blessed be God! the religion and morals of this country are not only purer in kind, but also more generally and practically influential than in Roman Catholic countries, yet that they who endeavour to make the word of God their rule of conduct are supposed by many, even here,

to push matters too far; and from the first the opponents of the African cause have endeavoured to obstruct our efforts by raising a cry of enthusiasm, fanaticism, &c. This cry, however, has been so long raised that it has nearly lost all its effect. For our private characters, we must refer your Majesty to the testimony of others. For the effects of our principles on our public conduct, I may appeal to my own parliamentary life of thirty-seven years' duration. But this much I will venture to say without the risk of contradiction, that great as the body is of religious men in this kingdom,—and, taking them in all their varieties, it is immensely great,—however they may differ in other respects, there is not, I believe, one single individual of the whole number who is not, and who has not ever been, a zealous friend of the Abolition of the Slave Trade,—who is not deeply sensible of the multiplied wrongs of the African race, and earnestly desirous of raising them from their unmerited depression. But I must earnestly entreat your Majesty to bear in mind what I have just now stated, whenever any, whether of your subjects or Europeans, with views more superficial than yours, may object to the practices or restraints which may arise from the religious principles of any of the persons recommended to you.

The only case of this kind that immediately occurs to me is that of the Lord's Day. I know that in all Roman Catholic countries it is usual for even religious people to devote the Sunday afternoon and evening to public and private festivities. Among Protestants there are different opinions as to the degree of strictness with which this day is to be kept; but all religious Protest-

ants, without exception, concur in abstaining from public amusements on the Sunday, and in thinking that the recreations of this day ought to have somewhat of a spiritual character. For my own part, I consider it as mainly intended for strengthening our impression of invisible and eternal things; for cultivating a spirit of love to God, and to our fellow-creatures; for devising and promoting plans for the glory of God, and the happiness of man; and, in short, for securing the great object of our everlasting welfare, which the Scriptures teach us depends on the use we make of this probationary state. On saying this concerning the religion of Protestants, your Majesty will remember I am stating what is their principle, not what may be the conduct of men who, though called Protestants, have little or no religion of any kind; and I am not afraid of your quoting on me, as an instance of the contrary to what I state, the conduct of most of my countrymen in the West Indies. With shame, I own, they constitute an exception to my argument, but an exception of which I trust no Haytian will be disposed to avail himself; and even one of that body, though one of our warmest opponents, recommended the correction of this crying abuse in some of its most important particulars, more especially in no longer letting the Sunday be the market day throughout the whole of the British West Indies.

To say the truth, the right to spend the Sunday as he pleases is essential to every Protestant idea of toleration; and I think far too highly of your Majesty not to be sure that this right of toleration is one of the very last that you would be disposed to abridge. But, further, in

proportion as any of your people become influenced by true religion, they will most likely wish to devote the whole of this day to religious exercises or recreation, and to abstain at least from the ordinary labours of their calling; and believe me that, at the year's end, it will not be found that the sum of your labour will be lessened by this abstinence. I well remember that during the war, when it was proposed to work all Sunday in one of the royal manufactories, for a continuance, not for an occasional service (for all Protestants hold themselves absolved from the general rule in cases of necessity and charity), it was found that the workmen who obtained government consent to abstain from working on Sundays executed in a few months even more work than the others. But I know to whom I am writing; and I will not proceed, as I otherwise might do, to insist on the inseparable connection between religion and morals; and that good morals as well as religion require that men should be left to obey their own sense of duty in this important particular. On consideration, indeed, I rather believe that even the Roman Catholics themselves do not think it right that men should spend any part of the Sunday in the ordinary labours of their calling, though they conceive that after public worship the Sunday may be lawfully allotted to spectacles and other public amusements. Long as I have dwelt on this subject of the Sunday, it is fit that I should make one more remark, — that it is the religious men of all classes and denominations that are, and will be, the friends of Haytian independence and improvement; and that as on the one hand nothing would recommend these in-

terests more powerfully to all these various religionists than the Protestant observance of the Sunday in Hayti, so, on the other, nothing would tend more to damp their ardour than hearing that Sunday was not distinguished in Hayti by men's abstaining from the ordinary labours of their calling. I am well aware, however, that in introducing this and every other reform, your Majesty must proceed with prudence and sobriety, and more especially I have not the remotest idea of your preventing those who may be so disposed from continuing to spend the Sunday as it is spent in Roman Catholic countries. Here I doubt not that your Majesty will agree with me, that people must be left to follow their own sense of duty.

Good morals how promoted.

But let me further remark on the important subject of religion, though your Majesty is too well enlightened to render it necessary for me to enter into any formal proof of the position, that as the wellbeing of every political community is intimately connected with the state of its morals, so religion is the only sound and stable basis of morality. Your acknowledgement, which I feel to be a gratifying mark of your confidence of the low state of morals in Hayti, affects me deeply. I scarcely need tell you that it is maliciously commented on by our opponents. But, as you truly remark, how could the case be otherwise, considering the state out of which your people emerged, and the events of the succeeding period? I rejoice from my heart that the Almighty has animated you with the great and generous purpose of improving the morals as the surest means of promoting the happiness of your

subjects. By the general diffusion of knowledge just principles will be introduced, and will gradually diffuse themselves throughout the community; the moral standard will be raised, vice will hide its head, and under your Majesty's countenance people of good character will obtain their just credit and ascendency.

Useful publications instructive and moral.

A great variety of excellent little works have been published in this country of late years for the purpose of inculcating useful knowledge and good morals. Many of these, though professing to be intended for the use of young people, may be read with advantage by persons of any age. A considerable number of these, therefore, have been purchased, and most of them, I trust, will be sent in the Kite. The particulars of them shall be stated to Comte Limonade; but I have thought it right to explain to your Majesty the real object in view in their transmission. Your Majesty will, I doubt not, concur with me in thinking that it may be expedient to let the better and handsomer of them be given as presents to those who distinguish themselves most at the public examinations; and also that a certain number of them should be put at the disposal of the several schoolmasters to stimulate or reward the industry of their pupils, or to bring forward such as they may think deserving of more than ordinary cultivation. A few copies of the different kinds that are very handsomely bound are intended for the use of your Majesty's own family who may be inclined to read them, and I cannot but flatter myself that they will derive both pleasure and profit from the perusal.

Female improvement.

And now let me avail myself of the opportunity of opening my mind to your Majesty on one of the most important subjects on which I can address you — a subject at the same time, I am aware, of no little delicacy. To your Majesty I scarcely need remark, that in every age and country one of the grand tests of civilisation and refinement has been the respect in which the female sex has been held, or, which is much the same thing, their general condition and treatment. On them devolves the important office of our education in our earlier years. They are the natural softeners and polishers of the roughness and coarseness of the manners of our sex; and it has been truly and well said, that without them our childhood would lose its most necessary support, our youth its best pleasures, and our old age its chief human consolation. Of the many glories of Christianity, it is one of its very first that it has raised the general estimate of the female sex to its just point of elevation; and to this cause is chiefly owing our superiority in all that regards the Christian and generous emotions of the heart, no less than that refinement and courtesy in manners which have so honourably distinguished the modern nations of Europe in comparison with the real barbarism of the most polished nations of the Pagan world, and of the votaries of all those various systems of false religion, Mahometism, &c. &c., which have prevailed and still prevail in so large a portion of the earth.

Under the impression of these sentiments I cannot but have witnessed with peculiar pleasure your Majesty's enlightened policy in this particular. But I own I cannot

but be very anxious that your Majesty should make it one of your chief objects to improve both the intellectual and moral character, as well as the manners of the Haytian females. I should be happy to be expressly commissioned to search out and send over to you some instructresses for the education not only of the female children of the bulk of the people, but also and even still more for that of the female children of the higher orders. One lady, indeed, goes by the Kite, who, if her health should be equal to the exertion, would be likely, I trust, to be useful in this way. In what regards the improvement both of the male and female sex, I am persuaded that our chief hopes must be founded on the rising generation; yet in this very country the happiest effects have followed from the recent introduction of adult schools. In these, persons of both sexes and all ages have learnt the art of reading, &c., and what I must confess I had not anticipated, the grown people learn with more facility than the children. Persons as old as fourscore, and of all intervening ages, have learnt in these seminaries; and the effects produced in many cases on the morals of the parties, as well as on their social comfort, have exceeded all that could have been hoped. In several instances men who had been idle drunken fellows, neglecting their wives and families, by merely learning for the first time to read their Bible had become no less remarkable for their sobriety, industry, and good conduct in domestic life. And here also let me not forget to remind your Majesty, that what I have said of the unlooked-for progress of learning to read of

the adults, applies to the female sex no less than to our own.

Conforming to instruction.

And now I proceed to a point of no little delicacy, on which I could not write as freely as I shall but for the confidence I repose in your Majesty, and for my hoping your Majesty will repose the same confidence in me; I allude to my having deviated in some instances from your instructions, more especially as to the sums to be expended in different objects, though I ought to state that in these cases I have acted I trust agreeably to your Majesty's instructions, though I may not have adhered expressly to the letter of them. But I must frankly state, that I trust I am not chargeable with vanity or presumption when I take it for granted your Majesty gives me credit for feeling the deepest possible interest in the success of a cause to which I have mainly devoted near thirty years of my life; and I hope I may say, that I am not likely to be a very incompetent adviser, when the interests of that cause are in question. I am happy to act for your Majesty according to the best of my knowledge and experience, to receive your directions as to the general objects to which you point my attention, and even to conform to them in every particular, so far as I conceive that I can do so with propriety. But it is impossible for your Majesty always to know by what precise means these general objects can be best fulfilled; and I must frankly state, without the fear of offending you, that one of the chief advantages to be expected from my being honoured with your commissions, instead of their being committed to any regular agent, is that I may ex-

ercise this sort of discretion. I trust I need not assure your Majesty, that I shall be at least as careful even of your pecuniary interest as I would be of my own; and, I will repeat it, I may perhaps be acting according to the spirit of your Majesty's instructions, and therefore in substantial observance of them, even at the very time that I may be differing from them in their literal detail. But on this head I earnestly request your Majesty will favour me with your undisguised sentiments in plain and precise terms. It will be a satisfaction to me to receive them; and still more, it will enable me to satisfy others, if any of my West Indian traducers should charge me with applying the funds with which you do me the honour to intrust me to different purposes from those to which you intended them. I mean to request Lord Teignmouth and Lord Gambier, the President of the Bible Society and of the Church Missionary Society, to be the auditors of my accounts. Their situations, combined with their very high character, has, even more than their rank and consequence, recommended them to me for this office.

Incessant interruptions, which it is next to impossible to prevent in the neighbourhood of London, have made me fall so behindhand in my Haytian business, that I am forced to hurry to a conclusion; yet there are some topics of extreme importance, which I must not leave altogether unnoticed. If, however, in what follows I rather hint my meaning than fully explain it, much less state at large my arguments for any measure I may specify, let me beg your Majesty to understand the cause of conciseness, and to take it for granted that I have

much to say for any course of conduct I may recommend. And, first, let me touch on a topic on which Mr. Stephen and I have often conferred; a topic too of the very first importance to the vital strength as well as the growing improvement of your kingdom. I am aware, indeed, that hitherto your Majesty has been under the necessity of considering yourself as at the head of a great army, in bivouac to be ready to repel the sudden assault of an invading enemy, rather than as administering the concerns of a kingdom at peace with all the world. This we know has rendered it necessary for you to be a nation of soldiers. But surely it cannot be but that you would have notice from your friends in this country if the French court should be infatuated enough to renew their attempt, and consequently should be preparing an expedition commensurate with such an object. I trust, therefore, that your Majesty may be able to allow your people to slide gradually into the various lines of civil industry, and yet to keep them in a state in which they may be at any time able to come forward effectually for their own preservation, even more than for your Majesty's defence. On this supposition the two objects which I was about to specify, as of extreme and urgent importance in the actual circumstances of your Majesty's kingdom, are the growth of provisions and cotton. Besides which, I trust that the naturalist and mineralogist will ere long enable your Majesty to avail yourself of the natural advantages of Hayti, by discovering new articles of advantageous export. As to provisions, it is an established maxim in political eco-

nomy, that the increase of food will infallibly ensure an augmented population. As for cotton, every motive of policy and humanity concur in recommending to the utmost possible extent the cultivation of an article so speedily raised, and for which there is a vast and increasing demand. I am happy also in being able to speak decisively of the effect of observing a certain method of cultivating, and still more of cleaning it, which I believe my friend Mr. Macaulay formerly sent to Comte Limonade. I will do myself the honour, however, of transmitting a fresh copy of similar, or nearly similar directions; because I can now add, that where they have been carefully pursued, the cotton has been sold for a decidedly larger price than other cotton in the British markets.

I now come to a topic which I scarcely need assure you is most interesting to my feelings; I mean the recognition of Haytian independence by this country. Here especially I have much to say, had I but the time for stating it; but the sum of all may be comprised in a few words, — that the House of Commons of this country is the body to the opinion of which the Government must ere long conform: that it contains a great number of men strongly prejudiced against that which, for brevity's sake, I may term the African cause; but 'tis true nevertheless, that while several individuals even of this body are susceptible of generous emotions, there is, I trust, a far greater number of men, now almost wholly ignorant of Haytian concerns, whose minds might be made to kindle into a generous flame by a fair statement of the past wrongs and sufferings, and

the present circumstances, and the opening prospects of your most interesting community. When this feeling is once excited, all the rest will follow of course; and I scarcely need assure your Majesty that I and my other friends will be ever on the watch to produce and cherish it. But to enable us better to perform this service it is desirable, and even necessary, that we should be furnished with a detailed though brief history of the principal Haytian occurrences, from the year 1790 or thereabouts to the present time. The more simple the narrative in which it shall be given the better, because it will be considered to be a more accurate delineation of facts, and to owe less to the colouring. I am happy in being able to add, that nothing will tend more powerfully to produce the just and virtuous sympathy which we wish to see prevail, than its being generally known that all the charges against you of oppression and cruelty are malicious calumnies; and that you are employing the rank and power with which Providence has invested you for the civilization, instruction, and moral elevation of your people.

I ought not to conclude this letter without explaining one circumstance in which your Majesty's wishes are still unfulfilled; I allude to your generous desire of contributing to some of our public institutions. I shall have no little pleasure in executing that commission; but this is just one of the cases I have before alluded to, in which your Majesty's friends resident in this country can judge far better concerning the proper season and mode, than any one can do who is on the other side of the Atlantic. I shall keep the matter in constant recol-

lection, and take the step at the time and in the circumstances which shall appear to your Majesty's friends to be most proper.

Augmentation of population.

Having often wished that there was any just and humane way by which the population of your kingdom might be augmented, while I was thinking on the subject the other day I received some information which I thought might possibly be turned to account. This is, that a society has recently been formed in the United States of America for the purpose of settling their free people of colour in Africa or elsewhere. Whether it may be possible or not for your Majesty to make any use of this intelligence, I know not; but I have thought it right to send it you. I will myself, without delay, apply to one of the principal members of the society; and will state through him to the committee, which consists of leading men from the various states of the Union, the generous efforts you are making for the improvement of your people, and will superadd my persuasion that they can perhaps in no way better accomplish their object of promoting the moral and social advancement of their coloured people, than by bringing them within the range of your benevolent operations.

Before I conclude, permit me to have the honour of sending to your Majesty a copy of the last edition of the British Encyclopædia. It is an excellent publication, in truth a library of itself; and I shall be gratified by your granting it a place in your collection, for the instruction of all your Majesty's family. You will also do me the honour, I hope, of accepting and placing

by their side the History of the Inquisition, and that of the Jesuits. There is also one other publication, entitled "Dialogues on Political Economy," which I am almost ashamed to lay before your Majesty; because I have not been able to get it ready bound, and the idea of sending it did not occur to me till yesterday. But it is a work of such uncommon excellence, and contains the substance of the larger works of Dr. Adam Smith and other subsequent writers, so clearly stated and in so small a compass, that notwithstanding its improper attire I cannot but wish to introduce it to your Majesty's acquaintance. It is the privilege of a friend to appear before another in dishabille. An additional difficulty was in the way of getting it bound yesterday; every shop being shut, not by order of government, but spontaneously, as a willing expression on the part of our whole people for the untimely death of our beloved Princess Charlotte and her infant offspring.

But when I was about to conclude, a point of great importance has just occurred to me, on which I wish to say a few words. We lately, with no small satisfaction, received an account of a measure your Majesty had adopted, which, though related somewhat indistinctly, impressed us with the persuasion that your Majesty was pursuing a course as to your interior policy which, especially if it should be followed out into its proper consequences, would be likely to conduce eminently both to the strength and happiness of your kingdom. This was to give by degrees, on terms of gradual purchase, to a number of men of superior rank and fortune, full property in their land. But it is on this point that I

wish further to state to your Majesty the advantages of extending the same principles of policy in the descending scale, by enabling those great proprietors to have a right to re-sell or rather re-let smaller portions of the same landed property to others, securing all these inferior landholders in the possession of their smaller properties as firmly as the larger proprietors are secured in their possession of the larger. This liberal policy was adopted in some of the largest provinces in our East Indian empire about twenty years ago, when Lord Teignmouth was governor-general of India; and a wiser and a better system never was pursued. In truth, it was the operation of this system which, as long ago as in the reign of Henry VII., first led the way to the superior greatness and power and comfort of this country, and which gave it a degree of strength and influence far beyond its natural size and population.

I cannot better conclude my long letter than by cordially wishing, that as your Majesty is now pursuing the course of an English monarch, our immortal Alfred, whom we justly account the greatest of all our princes, you may continue to move forward in the same honourable path, and be like him an example to all who shall hereafter occupy the Haytian throne.

I have the honour to be, &c.

W. WILBERFORCE.

P.S. Long as my letter has been, all has not yet been said which I wished to lay before your Majesty. I find that the plough is not in use in Hayti; and I have reason to believe, from information derived from books and men, that it would be likely to be eminently

useful in the present circumstances of Hayti. It has been introduced with great advantage even in our own West India islands, — slow as they are in general to receive improvements, as all countries are in which slavery prevails. I have therefore taken the liberty of sending two iron ploughs, which I am assured are of the best construction for the intended purpose. They were selected by Mr. Weatherley, who is thoroughly conversant with such matters. Let me beg your Majesty to do me the honour of accepting them, as a slight proof of the interest I take in the internal prosperity of your kingdom. I cannot but hope that my children, some of whom are even now old enough to sympathise with somewhat of their father's warmth of feeling in the fortunes of Hayti and in the success of your Majesty's beneficent plans, will witness the gathering in of a rich and glorious harvest from the seed which you are now sowing, and I trust that they will have reason to account it an honour to themselves that their father enjoyed the privilege of being in any degree permitted to assist in this social and moral cultivation.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO KING HENRY OF HAYTI.

London, November 27, 1819.

Sire, my Friend,

I rejoice in having received your Majesty's letter of the 10th of September within a day or two of the sailing for Hayti of a vessel by which the honest

rustics and their apparatus are to embark. I have already explained why I thought I should best execute your Majesty's commission by sending two ploughmen; and though one of them may appear encumbered with a wife and children, yet being assured that he is an honest and able man, I would not reject him for a cause which will naturally render him more steady and industrious.

Let me assure your Majesty that I in no degree misconstrue your application to our friend Clarkson for the two persons of whom you are in want. On the contrary, I am glad that you have applied to him, conscious that he has more leisure by far than myself; and at the same time, to show your Majesty how perfectly I understand you, and what credit we mutually give each other for friendly frankness and sincerity, I will not forget your Majesty's application; and if I hear of any person peculiarly qualified for the situation in question, I will mention him to Clarkson, that he may himself examine and inquire about him, and compare his qualifications and claims with those of any other candidate.

Both Houses of Parliament are just now called together at what has been a very unusual time for many years, in consequence of the designs and endeavours of many bad men to sow sedition and irreligion among our lower orders, many of whom are in great distress from a considerable stagnation both of internal and foreign trade, which we hope will not be of long continuance. I do not bear the late sittings so well as when I was younger, and I have now so little time at

command that your Majesty will excuse my sending you but a few lines. But I must express to you the gratification I have received from finding that the Baron de Vastey has been employing his pen in the very way my friend and brother Mr. Stephen wished, in order to enable him to serve the common cause; and I have also a few words to add on another most important subject: as it is also a subject of no little delicacy, I take the pen into my own hands.

In considering the state of things in Hayti with the eye either of a statesman or a moralist, and reasoning either from experience or from those principles which are acknowledged by all good writers, I am led to the conclusion which I formerly stated to your Majesty, and which indeed I remember with no little pleasure, that you yourself completely admitted that the object the most to be desired, and the attainment of which would most materially advance the prosperity and happiness of your people, is the advancement of morality, and the improvement and elevation of the female character. To this end education is indispensably necessary; and I shall continue to look out for female teachers whom I can confidently recommend. But I must add, that though this is a matter in which positive laws can do but little except in very gross cases of adultery and seduction, yet that the influence of the court, and perhaps a voluntary association among the different classes of society, might be of very powerful operation. We boast in this country, not without reason, that, speaking of the higher circles, our women are much more generally faithful to their husbands

than the ladies of any other country in Europe; Switzerland and Holland perhaps excepted. Yet we know but too well that in the time of Charles II. many of our women of quality were justly regarded as licentious. The fact was, that the court was then dissolute; and even in the reigns of the two first Georges, our court was not quite pure. But it is the just praise of our present beloved Sovereign, whose misfortune is felt by every Englishman almost as that of a relative or a friend, that his long reign of sixty years has been remarkable for the unpolluted purity of the court. The Queen, who died, as you know, but lately, never would receive at court any lady of blemished reputation. An excellent story is told of one of her best friends, a lady of high rank, who received a memorable reproof in endeavouring to obtain a dispensation from the common rule in the case of her daughter, who had misbehaved with a nobleman of high rank. "What excuse," said the Dutchess to the Queen, "shall I make to my daughter for not succeeding with your Majesty; for she will not suppose it possible you could refuse me such a favour, and will therefore infer that I never asked it?" "Tell her," replied the Queen, "that you had not the courage to make such a request of me."

Now I have heard with pleasure that your Majesty's own family sets an example of domestic virtue and attachment, like that of our own king and queen. Would it be impossible to have voluntary associations in the different classes of your society, by which, in private parties, those females only were to be ad-

mitted who were of unstained reputation? If this could be introduced, I am persuaded that by degrees the standard of public morality would be raised. It would become disreputable for a woman to be an intriguer; and though I am not sanguine enough to suppose that it would be possible altogether to prevent intrigues, yet they would be kept secret, and thereby would be prevented from producing public scandal. I am sure your Majesty will excuse my throwing out this hint, which proceeds from the deep interest I take in the wellbeing and character of your community; and I may truly add, from the confidence I repose both in your judgment and disposition to receive with kindness whatever I may suggest to you.

I have other matters to mention, but for the present I must conclude, assuring your Majesty that I am ever, with cordial respect and regard,

Your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

WM. WILBERFORCE, ESQ. TO THE HEAD OF THE HAYTIAN GOVERNMENT.

Bath, December 16, 1820.

Sir,

Though I am not informed of the name of the correspondent whom I am about to address, and can only, therefore, describe him by his official character; yet

some intelligence which I have this day received prompts me to apply to you.

It is currently reported that M. de Vastey has been imprisoned by the new Government of Hayti, and that it is intended to punish him capitally. I have so often found statements concerning Haytian affairs to be false, though asserted with the utmost confidence, that I am by no means disposed to give implicit credit to this report. Nevertheless, as it may be true, I have resolved to take up the pen,—the rather, indeed, because there are other subjects on which I wish to address you, subjects even of more importance and still deeper interest.

I am utterly ignorant of the crimes of which M. de Vastey may have been guilty; and therefore it is not for me to presume to form any opinion on the punishment to be inflicted on him. But it cannot be wrong, nor can it, I trust, be in any degree likely to offend, if, taking, as I must ever do, a deep interest in all that concerns the character and fortunes of all the descendants of the African race, I feel desirous of enforcing on you the important truth, that the eyes of all the civilised world are anxiously directed towards you; and that the course which the Haytians shall pursue in their present critical circumstances, may tend powerfully to gladden or to depress the hearts of those who, like myself, have long been their partisans and advocates. Often has it been confidently affirmed by those who would support the old prejudices which so long obstructed the recognition of their just claim to the common rights and privileges of our nature, that one of the

proofs of their inferiority was the violence and cruelty with which they were disposed to act towards each other in those contentions which too commonly take place in political society, although the treatment which they themselves have so long experienced has given them a far better right to recriminate and to reproach their persecutors with being more justly subject to this imputation. An occasion has lately arisen among you for verifying or refuting the charge of which I have been speaking; and I cannot but fondly cherish the hope, that the treatment of those of your countrymen who may have deserved punishment will be, to use a phrase of our own, "Judgment administered with Mercy." I say this the rather, because the attention of our own countrymen has of late been called peculiarly to the administration of our criminal law; and we have found reason to believe that the punishment of crimes in this country had been more severe than true wisdom or humanity could warrant. At all events, you will, I trust, see the importance of letting the principles of your proceedings be manifest to the world, and that you will let even guilty men enjoy the benefit of a fair and impartial trial.

But it is not only on this head that I wish to address you, but also on other topics which cannot but interest me most deeply, as well as all the other friends of Africa and her descendants. I cannot but hope that the seeds of knowledge and civilisation which have already been sown among you will not be torn up and exterminated; but, on the contrary, that they will be suffered to grow up and produce their good fruits for the improvement and happiness of the Haytian people. I

am confident that you never can harbour the unjust opinion, that because the late King of Hayti was the friend of instruction and the establisher of schools, any prejudice against them should be entertained. On the contrary, I cannot but believe that in proportion as you are friends to liberty, you will be only the more warmly attached to that knowledge which is its natural associate. More especially I would earnestly recommend to you the instruction of the female sex. On them in every country must devolve the education of its inhabitants in their earliest years; and I cannot but regard it as one of the chief glories of my own country, and more especially when compared with all the nations of antiquity, that we have assigned to the female sex its true estimation, while at the same time its just claim to an equal measure both of the intellectual and moral faculties has been nobly vindicated by our having females in every station of life and every walk of literature. When the sovereign of this country has been a queen, it has more than once risen to the highest point to which it ever attained both of greatness and of glory; and as we have become ourselves a more civilised and cultivated people, we have learned to promote the education of our females, and to treat them with increased respect. Let me then earnestly recommend it to you to establish schools for the instruction of the female sex also; a want which has not yet been supplied, and which remains, I trust, for you to accomplish. I shall be happy in this and in every other instance to render you all the assistance in my power; and you can t gratify me more than by showing you give me credit for

sincerity of these declarations. I will now detain you no longer than while I subscribe myself, with the warmest wishes, and let me add sincere prayers, for the happiness and true glory of the Haytian people,

Sir,

Your faithful Servant,

W. WILBERFORCE.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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